

OBAMA'S ISRAEL TEST ■ THE MCCAIN COURT ■ KOSOVO POWDER KEG

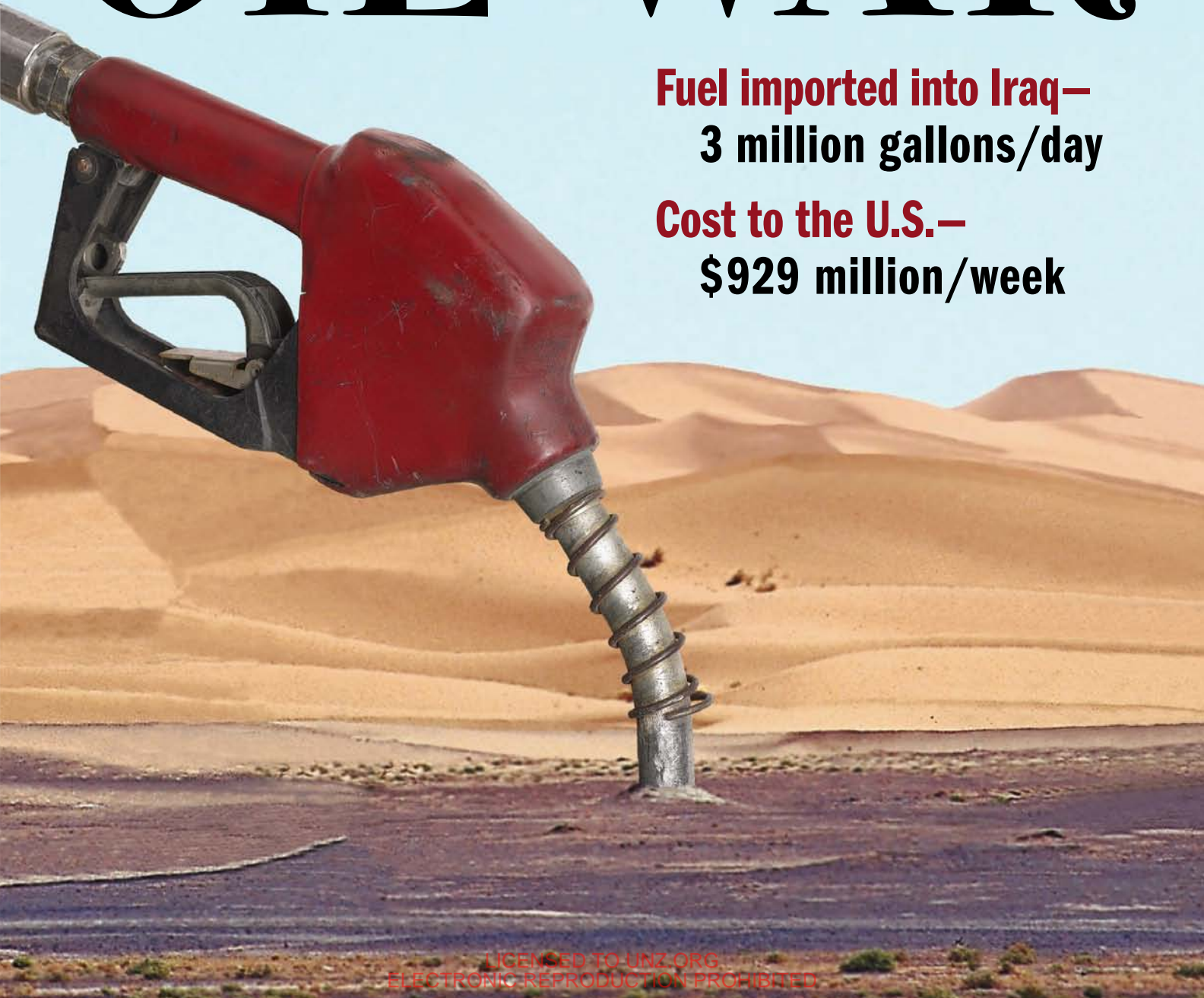
MARCH 10, 2008

The American Conservative

OIL FOR WAR

**Fuel imported into Iraq—
3 million gallons/day**

**Cost to the U.S.—
\$929 million/week**

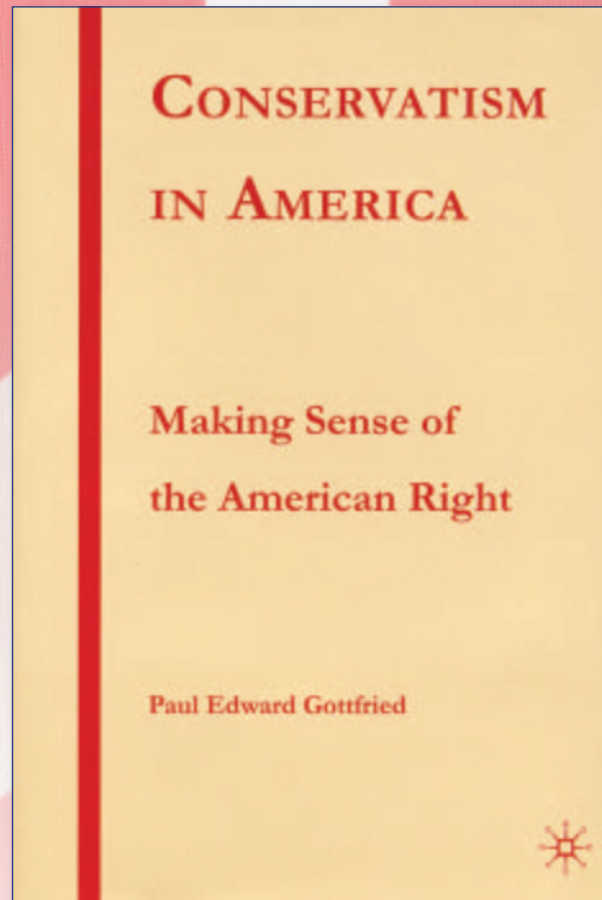


“A must read for students of American conservatism.”

—Peter Brimelow, Editor, VDARE.COM

“Paul Gottfried... poses the painful questions that others flee from and offers interpretations that compel close attention from all who wish to understand the prospects for a conservative movement.”

—Eugene D. Genovese, author of
The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism



In this important book, Paul Edward Gottfried gives a fascinating account of the American conservative movement, arguing that it has been largely an invention of journalists and Republican activists. He shows how the movement has exaggerated the permanence of its values, and how both its instilled anti-Communism and its rejection of dissent have sapped its capacity for internal debate. Movement conservatives, who work disproportionately for Beltway publications and policy institutes, do not have a real social base. Their movement came to power partly by burying an older, anti-welfare state Right that had in fact enjoyed a social following concentrated in small town America. The newcomers played down the merits of those they had replaced and in the 1980's the neoconservatives, who took over the postwar conservative movement from an earlier generation, belittled their predecessors in a similar way. Among the movement's major accomplishments has been a recreation of its own past. The success of this revised history lies in the fact that even the movement's critics are now inclined to accept it.



AP/LIVE

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[RIP]

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR. (1925-2008)

Almost every American conservative over 35 would acknowledge a debt to William F. Buckley. The founder and longtime editor of *National Review*, gifted debater, author, and columnist seemed in the 1960s to be the country's only erudite, witty conservative. That wasn't true, of course, but he was the one person who succeeded in thrusting conservatism into the mainstream. How many tens of thousands of young self-described "radicals" of that era came across a Buckley column or "Firing Line" episode and found themselves agreeing—or at least acknowledging that he made his points thoughtfully? Quite often he was the gateway to full-fledged conservatism.

Buckley was an intellectual, a showman, and an organizer of talent—gifts that rarely all reside within one individual. He was usually right about the big political subjects, and it was America and conservatism's great loss that his late-in-life perception about the unwisdom of the Iraq invasion and opposition to the neoconservative project arrived when he was semi-retired and his ability to influence the country was but a fraction of what it once had been.

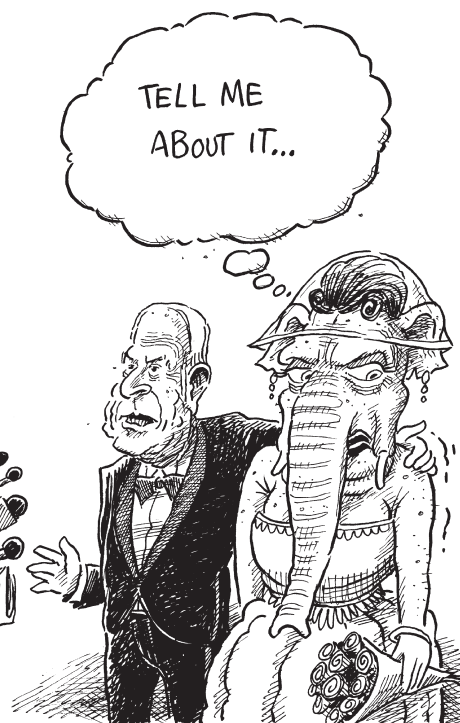
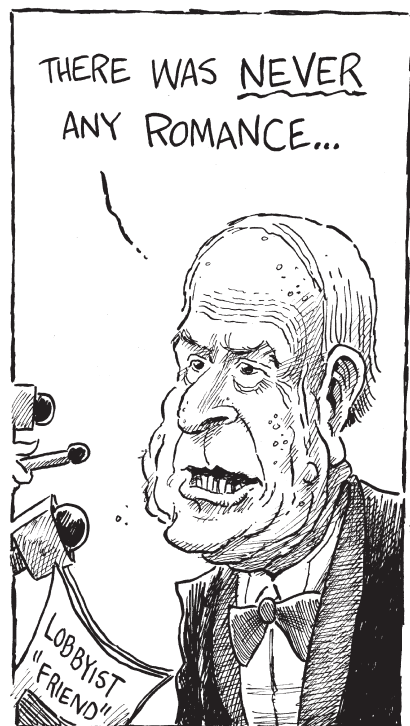
[WAR]

SUPPORT THE TROOPS

The 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment just returned to Iraq for a fifth tour. If war is hell, this one needs a new Dante.

Far from drawing down our forces, the Pentagon projects that by July there will be 140,000 troops in theater—8,000 more than when President Bush initiated his surge strategy in January 2007. The cost is high, the damage deep.

The current *New England Journal of Medicine* reports the findings of the first large-scale study on the effects of head injuries, the IED's signature wound.



Thousands are suffering traumatic brain injury, but even those who escape without visible damage are experiencing long-term effects. One in six troops sustains at least one concussion in Iraq, and of those reporting loss of consciousness, 44 percent go on to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms include sleep problems, psychological disruption, and social adjustment issues. It will take years to uncover the full cost of our folly.

One immediate tally is rising at an alarming rate: in 2007, suicide among active-duty soldiers reached its highest level since the Army began keeping records, up 20 percent from the year before. We regularly hear that the stress of an open-ended operation is breaking our military, but the cost is all too human. Among those returning for a fifth tour this week is Reymondo Parra. He already has two Purple Hearts.

[FALLOUT]

TURKS & KURDS

One of the many mistakes the United States made in invading Iraq was neglecting to inform the likely beneficiaries of the limits of its power. Take the Kurds, for instance. Securing their "autonomy" in Northern Iraq is usually sold as one of the big successes of the

invasion—no security problems, economy beginning to thrive, a fine place for journalists who want to report "good" news. But it seems one of the first things the Kurds did when they got their territory was to turn it into sanctuary from which to attack Turkey.

Now the Turks have one of the most powerful militaries in the region and aren't happy about PKK guerrillas crossing the border, killing Turks, and then running back into Northern Iraq and yelling "safe zone" or whatever the Kurdish term is. Last week, the Turks began to pursue the Kurds in earnest, sending troops across the frontier between the countries.

Iraq's foreign minister is chiding the United States as "the greatest force on the ground" to "do more" but so far to no avail. Apparently occupying the lands of the Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'ites is more than enough for an exhausted American Army. The Kurds may be on their own—something they probably should have thought of sooner.

[ELECTION]

GRAY LADY PLAYS MATCHMAKER

The *New York Times* did something for John McCain that he could never do for himself: unite the Republican Party

behind him. Conservatives saw McCain's surprise capture of the nomination as a forced marriage. "Not him!" they cried. On campaign finance reform, global warming, torture, and immigration, Rush Limbaugh wailed, "He's all wrong for us." Some even suggested breaking free: Sean Hannity told his listeners to declare their independence from the GOP.

But if conservatives couldn't be with the one they loved, the *New York Times* convinced them to love the one they're with. The poorly sourced attack on McCain for his alleged relations—financial and physical—with a young blonde lobbyist suddenly made the maverick seem desirable. If the *New York Times* was attacking him, he must be doing something right. "He supported the surge," Hannity explained, trying to convince himself and his listeners. Talk-radio host Bill Cunningham described the "softening" of his heart after the *Times* incident.

Now conservatives have something in common with John McCain. In the absence of affection, shared hatred will suffice.

[POLITICS] **PERSECUTED AT PRINCETON?**

In a curious replay of a 1992 election theme, the personality of a candidate's wife has become an election issue. It's easy to see why many who admire Barack Obama are less keen on Michelle. He seems like a genuine post-racial figure. She, by contrast, can't help dragging everything back to a racial context. Her recent remark that her husband's success was the source of her first-ever pride in America highlighted the Michelle difference. What a thing for an aspiring first lady to say!

But there were signs that something like this was in store. On "60 Minutes" last year, Michelle opined, "As a black man, Barack could get killed just going

to the gas station"—a statement implying a white conspiracy to kill blacks that even Al Sharpton would run from.

Michelle Obama was a beneficiary of affirmative action and seems to carry the resentments that come from attending schools where most classmates were much better prepared academically than she was. After a short stint as a lawyer, she became a big player in the racial-diversity industry, making \$316,000 a year for an ill-defined job managing the "business diversity program" and "fostering the University of Chicago's relationship with the surrounding community"—a fair indication that phasing out race-based affirmative action won't be an Obama administration priority.

None of this will have a decisive impact on the race, and it's unlikely Obama is going to ask his wife to become a shrinking violet for the remainder of the campaign. But she may mellow out or even think up some things that make her proud about America before she redecorates the Lincoln bedroom. Millions of people hope so.

[IMMIGRATION] **DIFFERENT STROKES**

Last week Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert ordered a crackdown on the growing problem of illegal immigration. The next day Israeli police arrested 200 undocumented Africans in a neighborhood near Tel Aviv's train station.

When Americans worry about illegal immigration, the Anti Defamation League has a rich vocabulary to describe them, words like "extremist" and "xenophobia." So we're sure the ADL will blow its whistle and express grave concern about this troubling example of intolerance practiced in a country very sensitive to American opinion. Yes, we're certain that Abe Foxman will denounce Olmert's action right away. Very soon. Any day now. ■

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[fueling hostility]

Oil for War

After invading one of the most petroleum-rich countries on earth, the U.S. military is running on empty.

By Robert Bryce

NAPOLÉON FAMOUSLY SAID that an army marches on its stomach. That may have been true for his 19th-century force. But the modern American military runs on jet fuel—and lots of it.

Today the average American G.I. in Iraq uses about 20.5 gallons of fuel every day, more than double the daily volume consumed by U.S. soldiers in Iraq in 2004. Thus, in order to secure the third-richest country on the planet, the U.S. military is burning enormous quantities of petroleum. And nearly every drop of that fuel is imported into Iraq. These massive fuel requirements—just over 3 million gallons per day for Operation Iraqi Freedom, according to the Pentagon's Defense Energy Support Center—are a key reason for the soaring cost of the war effort.

Controlling Iraq's oil has historically been a vital factor in America's involvement in Iraq and was always a crucial element of the Bush administration's plans for the post-Saddam era. Of course, that's not how the war was sold to the American people. A few months before the invasion, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared that the looming war had "nothing to do with oil, literally nothing to do with oil." The war was necessary, its planners claimed, because Saddam Hussein supported terrorism and, left unchecked, he would unleash weapons of mass destruction on the West.

Nevertheless, oil was the foremost strategic focus for the U.S. military in Iraq.

The first objectives of the invading forces included the capture of key Iraqi oil terminals and oilfields. On March 20, 2003, Navy SEALs engaged in the first combat of the war when they launched a surprise invasion of the Mina al-Bakr and Khor al-Amaya oil loading terminals in the Persian Gulf. A few hours later, Marine Lt. Therral Childers became the first U.S. soldier to die in combat in the invasion when he was killed fighting for control of the Rumaylah oil field in southern Iraq.

Oil was also the first objective when U.S. forces reached Baghdad on April 8. Although the National Library of Iraq, the National Archives, and the National Museum of Antiquities were all looted and in some cases burned, the oil ministry building was barely damaged. That's because a detachment of American soldiers and a half-dozen assault vehicles were assigned to guard the ministry and its records.

After all, the war's architects had promised that oil money was going to rebuild Iraq after the U.S. military took control. In March 2003, Paul Wolfowitz told a Congressional panel, "The oil revenues of that country could bring between \$50 and \$100 billion over the course of the next two or three years. Now, there are a lot of claims on that money, but ... we are dealing with a country that can really finance its own reconstruction and relatively soon." As Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor explained in their 2006 book,

Cobra II, "The Pentagon had promised that the reconstruction of Iraq would be 'self-financing,' and the preservation of Iraq's oil wealth was the best-prepared and -resourced component of Washington's postwar plan."

After the invasion, when inspectors failed to find any weapons of mass destruction, Bush and his supporters changed their story, claiming that the U.S. had invaded Iraq to spread democracy in the Middle East. When democracy failed to materialize, the justification for the invasion turned to oil. During an October 2006 press conference, Bush declared that the U.S. could not "tolerate a new terrorist state in the heart of the Middle East with large oil reserves that could be used to fund its radical ambitions or used to inflict economic damage on the West."

The U.S. military and the new Baghdad government have failed, however, to secure Iraq's tattered oil sector. As A.F. Alhajji, energy economist and professor at Ohio Northern University, has said, "whoever controls Iraq's oil, controls Iraq." For the last five years, it's never been exactly clear who controls Iraq's oil. That said, the country's leading industry is slowly increasing output. In January, daily production hit 2.4 million barrels per day, the highest level since the U.S. invasion.

But America's presence in Iraq isn't making use of the local riches. Indeed, little, if any, Iraqi oil is being used by the

American military. Instead, the bulk of the fuel needed by the U.S. military is being trucked in from the sprawling Mina Abdulla refinery complex, which lies a few dozen kilometers south of Kuwait City. In 2006 alone, the Defense Energy Support Center purchased \$909.3 million in motor fuel from the state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. In addition to the Kuwaiti fuel, the U.S. military is trucking in fuel from Turkey. But some of that Turkish fuel actually originates in refineries as far away as Greece.

In 2007 alone, the U.S. military in Iraq burned more than 1.1 billion gallons of fuel. (American Armed Forces generally use a blend of jet fuel known as JP-8 to propel both aircraft and automobiles.) About 5,500 tanker trucks are involved in the Iraqi fuel-hauling effort. That fleet of trucks is enormously costly. In November 2006, a study produced by the U.S. Military Academy estimated that delivering one gallon of fuel to U.S. soldiers in Iraq cost American taxpayers \$42—and that didn't include the cost of the fuel itself. At that rate, each U.S. soldier in Iraq is costing \$840 per day in fuel delivery costs, and the U.S. is spending \$923 million per week on fuel-related logistics in order to keep 157,000 G.I.s in Iraq. Given that the Iraq War is now costing about \$2.5 billion per week, petroleum costs alone currently account for about one-third of all U.S. military expenditure in Iraq.

Soaring fuel costs are largely a product of the fact that U.S. forces have been forced to defend themselves against improvised explosive devices. The majority of American casualties in Iraq have been due to IED attacks, primarily on motor vehicles. The U.S. military has spent billions of dollars on electronic countermeasures to combat the deadly devices, but those countermeasures have largely failed. Instead, the troops have had to rely on old-fashioned hardened steel. Since the beginning of the war, the Penta-

gon has introduced numerous programs to add armor skins to its fleet of Humvees.

But even the newest armored Humvees, which weigh about six tons, haven't been enough to protect soldiers against the deadly explosives. Last year, Congress, the White House, and the Pentagon agreed on a four-year plan to spend about \$20 billion on a fleet of 23,000 mine-resistant ambush protection vehicles or MRAPs. Last August, the Pentagon ordered 1,520 of the vehicles at a cost of \$3.5 million each.

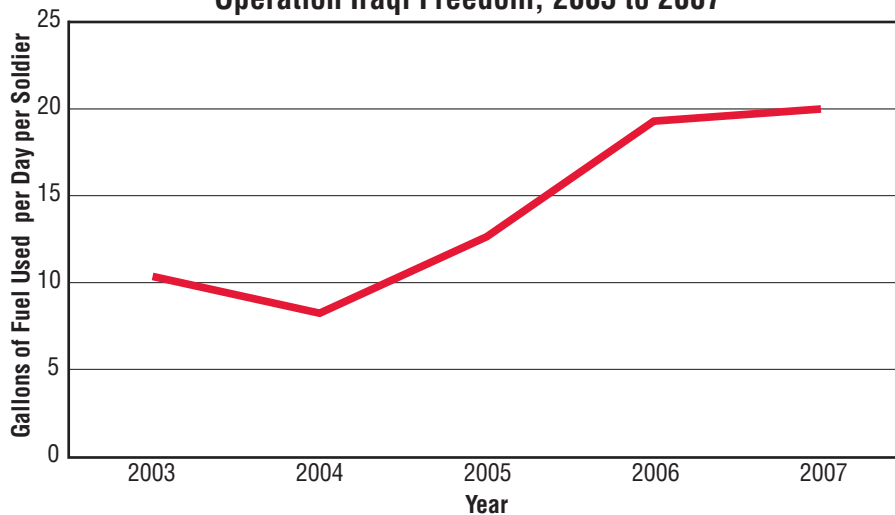
The MRAPs mean even greater demand for fuel from U.S. troops in Iraq. An armored Humvee covers perhaps 8 miles per gallon of fuel. One version of the MRAP, the Maxxpro, weighs about 40,000 pounds, and according to a source within the military, gets just 3 miles per gallon. The increased demand for fuel for the MRAPs will come alongside the need for an entirely new set of tires, fan belts, windshields, alternators, and other gear.

This swelling of the logistics train creates yet another problem for the military: an increase in supply trucks on the road, which demands yet more fuel and provides insurgents with a greater range of targets to attack.

While the U.S. military chases its own fuel tail in Iraq, a country that sits atop 115 billion barrels of oil—about 9.5 percent of the world's total—the global energy industry is racing forward with new alliances and deals, many of which would have been unthinkable before the invasion. Those alliances have far-reaching significance for America's foreign and energy policy. The world's oil market is no longer shaped by U.S. military power. Markets are trumping militarism. As one analyst put it recently, dollars are replacing "bullets" as shapers of the geopolitical picture."

The importance of this point is obvious: as the effectiveness of militarism in controlling global energy trends is declining, the U.S. is spending billions of dollars a week in Mesopotamia on a war effort that—if John McCain is right—could drain the American treasury for decades to come. Meanwhile, America's key rivals, China and Russia in particular, are using their influence to forge economic alliances that are realigning the global balance of power. They are creating a multipolar world in which America's influence will be substantially diminished.

Average Fuel Use by U.S. Troops Stationed in Iraq as Part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2003 to 2007



This realignment is particularly advantageous for major energy exporting countries such as Russia, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and of course, Iran. These states are taking advantage of higher energy prices caused by ever-increasing global energy demand and tightening supplies. And while the Bush administration has tried to diminish the influence of countries like Iran and Russia, there's little, if anything, the U.S. can do to slow the trend. The myriad of energy exploration and production contracts that the Iranians have signed in recent months proves the point.

Meanwhile, Russia's state-controlled behemoth, Gazprom, has consolidated its hold on the European natural gas market. Add the massive financial power of the sovereign wealth funds of just three countries—Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, who hold a combined \$1.4 trillion in assets—and the shift in power becomes even more apparent. Higher energy prices are the main difference between the first Iraq War and the second, says Jeff Dietert, a managing director at Simmons & Company International, a Houston-based investment banking firm that focuses on the energy sector. "It's a completely different result from the first Iraq War, which was really a demonstration of military prowess. It was quick and decisive versus the current situation in Iraq, which is slow, expensive and drawn out."

The Kurds have been quick to exploit new opportunities in the fast-changing oil market. In direct defiance of the weak central government in Baghdad, the Kurdistan Regional Government has signed 15 oil exploration deals with 20 companies from 12 countries. Increasing oil production benefits the Kurds. It also helps Turkey, which stands to reap more revenue from the Kirkuk to Ceyhan pipeline, which will carry much of the new production. A Norwegian

company, DNO ASA, has already built a pipeline from their Tawke oil field north of Mosul to an interconnection point immediately next to the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline.

Geneva-based Addax Petroleum is another big player in Kurdistan. During a presentation at an oil and gas conference in Connecticut in September, the company's chief financial officer, Michael Ebsary, said that Addax's potential reserves in Kurdistan may be as large as 2.7 billion barrels of oil. (Addax's partner in the project is a Genel Enerji, a subsidiary of the Cukorova Group, one of Turkey's biggest conglomerates.) "Everyone sees the Kurdish region as an area that has to be developed. There's tons of oil there," Ebsary told me. "It has to get out."

The same can be said for Iranian oil and gas. One of the unintended consequences of the Iraq War has been the strengthening of Iran's influence in the region. In 2007 alone, the Iranians cut deals—worth perhaps \$50 billion over the next few decades—with companies from Britain, Spain, Brazil, China, Austria, Turkey, and Malaysia. In addition to those projects, the Iranian government is still negotiating the pricing formulas for the long discussed, much-delayed Peace Pipeline, the \$7 billion, 1600-mile conduit to carry Iranian gas to Pakistan and India. In 2005, Susil Chandra Tripathi, the secretary of India's ministry of petroleum and natural gas, promised that the deal would eventually go through. He told me that the U.S. may "want to isolate Iran, but that doesn't mean Iran will quit producing crude oil and gas, or that we will stop buying it."

Another indication of the shift in power can be seen by looking at the new the Dubai Mercantile Exchange, which last June began trading the Oman Crude Oil Futures Contract. By getting into the energy futures business, Dubai is assuring that the crude oil coming out of the

Persian Gulf has its own benchmark price—one that is not reliant on Western crude oil standards such as West Texas Intermediate and North Sea Brent. It also puts Dubai in competition with the traditional trading hubs in New York and London. In July 2006, Gary King, the CEO of the Dubai exchange, told me that the emergence of the exchange and the new futures contract indicates that the Persian Gulf is "the center of the world's biggest hydrocarbon province. Most of the growth in oil consumption is in Asia-Pacific. So it's a natural shift in gravity. Our timing is very opportune to be in that center of gravity."

This change cannot be stopped or ignored. In today's multi-polar world, economic interests, not military force, predominate. "It used to be that the side with the most guns would win," says G.I. Wilson, a recently retired Marine Corps colonel, who has written extensively on terrorism and asymmetric warfare and spent 15 months fighting in Iraq. Today, says Wilson, the side "with the most guns goes bankrupt."

Since World War II, America has held fast to the idea that controlling the oil flow out of the Persian Gulf must be assured at the point of a M-16 rifle. But the cost of that approach has been crippling. As the U.S. military pursues its occupation of Iraq—with the fuel costs approaching \$1 billion per week—it's obvious that the U.S. needs to rethink the assumption that secure energy sources depend on militarism. The emerging theme of the 21st-century energy business is the increasing power of markets. The U.S. can either adapt or continue hurtling down the road to bankruptcy. ■

Robert Bryce is the managing editor of Energy Tribune magazine. His third book, Gusher of Lies: The Dangerous Delusions of "Energy Independence, will be published on March 10.

Is Brown the New Black?

Assimilating Latinos into the politics of victimhood.

By Steve Sailer

THE SLUGFEST between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, in which only the most painstaking analyst can discern any disagreement over policy, highlights the ancient yet growing importance of ethnic identity in politics.

The race didn't start out that way. The 2007 polls showed that blacks favored Senator Clinton, the wife of "America's first black president," over Senator Obama, the preppie from paradise. Yet when the crunch came, four-fifths of black Democratic primary voters rallied to the yuppie technocrat's banner.

Shaken by the defection of an ethnicity Hillary had assumed was hereditarily hers, the Clinton campaign then pointed to the Latino vote as its "firewall." And in the important California primary, Hispanics did vote 67 percent to 32 percent for the former first lady. Elsewhere, however, the vaunted Hispanic bloc didn't quite live up to expectations. Hillary responded to her Super Tuesday woes by firing her Hispanic campaign manager, Patti Solis Doyle, and replacing her with Maggie Williams, who is black. As I write, Mrs. Clinton is left hoping that Latinos will bail her out in the upcoming Texas primary.

The multiracialization of American politics has barely begun. When it comes to identity politics, numbers count. And a new population projection from the Pew Research Center estimates that Hispanics will grow from 42 million in 2005 to a jaw-dropping 128 million in 2050. Meanwhile, African Americans will increase from 38 million to 57 million. (Caucasians will barely creep over the 200 million mark, pre-

sumably on the strength of Middle Eastern immigration.)

The relationship between blacks and Latinos will become increasingly central to American life, but it's a murky phenomenon, poorly understood by the white-dominated press.

Despite the hype, the Latino electorate has been growing much less impressively than the Latino population. Although Hispanics comprise about 15 percent of the residents of this country, they only cast 5.8 percent of the votes in the 2006 midterm elections, according to the Pew Hispanic Center's crunching of the raw data from the Census Bureau's big biennial voting survey. That was up from 5.3 percent in 2002—steady growth but hardly the political tsunami that we've been told about over and over. In contrast, blacks accounted for 10.3 percent of the vote, 77 percent more than Hispanics.

Thus it's far better, especially in the Democratic primaries, to get four-fifths of the black vote, as Obama does, than two-thirds of the Hispanic vote, as Mrs. Clinton does. Although Clinton has typically beaten Obama among whites, Obama does well enough that his large margin among black Democrats keeps him competitive. (Clinton's secret weapon has been Asians, who sided with her 71-25 percent in California.)

One reason the black-Hispanic relationship is poorly understood is that class intersects with ethnicity in complex ways. At the bottom of society, among prison and street gangs, race rules. In the Los Angeles County jail, which is 60 percent Hispanic and 30 percent black, the two groups fought mur-

derous battles in 2006. Last October, federal prosecutors accused the Florencia 13 street gang of trying to ethnically cleanse blacks from its unincorporated neighborhood in LA County. (The political impact of this violence shouldn't be exaggerated, though. The respectable folk who do most of the voting don't approve of gangbangers feuding.)

In poorer neighborhoods, black residents feel uneasy about men speaking Spanish around them. Not being able to understand what is being said robs them of their street smarts. Are the two men next to you at the bus stop talking in Spanish about soccer or are they plotting to mug you? Who knows?

At the top of the power structure, in the House of Representatives and state legislatures, blacks and Latinos get along quite well, united by party (92 percent of elected Hispanics are Democrats) and a mutual desire to keep the affirmative action gravy train chugging along. Ward Connerly, a black opponent of ethnic quotas, has noted that when he was a regent of the University of California, the heaviest pressure on the regents to cheat on the anti-preference language written into the state constitution by Prop. 209 came not from the Black Caucus in the legislature but from the larger Latino Caucus. They threatened to cut UC's budget unless more Hispanic applicants were admitted.

Black politicians tend to view Hispanics today much as Irish politicians once saw their fellow Catholic Poles: silent partners in their coalition who should be grateful for their natural leaders' experience and charm. Not surprisingly,

Hispanics don't agree. In some of the formerly all-black slum municipalities just south of Los Angeles, where Hispanics now make up the great majority of residents but only half of voters, ethnic politics has gotten nasty. But overall, Hispanic politicians know that time is on their side, so they can be patient about the arrogance of black colleagues.

In the middle levels of society, blacks and Latinos do compete. Relations aren't warm, but African-American men have tended to cede blue-collar jobs to immigrants without putting up massive resistance. Moreover, the swelling numbers and various dysfunctions of illegal immigrants generate numerous jobs for civil servants (who are typically required to be citizens). Therefore, many blacks are paid by taxpayers to teach, police, guard, administer, and otherwise deal with illegal aliens. It doesn't make for trans-ethnic amity, but it's a living.

There's another reason that black-Hispanic relations are poorly understood. Americans just don't pay much attention to Latinos. In American public discourse, Hispanics, especially Mexican-Americans, who now number about 30 million, remain what interstellar "dark matter" is to astrophysicists—a quantitatively significant yet mysteriously featureless aspect of the universe.

This is not for a lack of motivation on the part of America's corporate and political elites. Consultants have been trumpeting the growing numbers of Hispanics for a generation. Marketers have been lusting for the emergence of more Mexican-American celebrities to plug their products at least since Nancy Lopez's record-setting 1978 LPGA rookie season made her the most popular female golfer ever.

Although the media constantly tries to drum up interest in Hispanics by extolling them as "swing voters" living in "vibrant neighborhoods" and so forth, the tedious reality is that the word that

best sums up Latino America is inertia. Things just sort of keep on keeping on in the general direction that they were already moving. While Obama-mania sweeps the more fashion-frenzied white Democrats, Hispanics have stuck by the name brand they know.

Despite long-standing predictions that Americans will soon become fascinated by all things Latin, the public remains much more interested in African-Americans. In popular culture, trends flow from African-Americans to Mexican-Americans. The latter listen to hip-hop, but the former will not listen to music featuring accordions and trumpets. There have been exceptions—the bouncing lowrider cars that were popular in old-school rap videos were a Mexican-American invention—but black remains cooler than brown. Professional trendspotter Irma Zandl admitted in 2003 to *American Demographics*, a market research trade publication, that her biggest mistake had been predicting the increasing Latinization of American culture back in 1988. Fifteen years later, "there are still no mass fashion trends, no mass entertainment trends, no mass social trends rooted in the Hispanic culture." While there are a number of prominent Cubans, Puerto Ricans and other Caribbean Hispanics, there are still remarkably few famous Mexican-Americans.

Consider the forgotten man of the 2008 Democratic race, former energy secretary and UN ambassador Bill Richardson. Quantitatively, Richardson out-Obamas Obama. Is the Illinois senator half-minority? Well, the New Mexico governor is three-fourths minority. Did Obama live from ages 6 to 10 in a fairly important foreign country, Indonesia? Richardson lived from 1 to 13 among the power elite of the country that has the most direct impact on America, Mexico. But nobody cared, and Richardson quietly dropped out. Black simply trumps Mexican in the fascination sweepstakes.

This lack of interest hasn't stopped white commentators from theorizing about the impact of immigration they would find if they bothered to look. George Will, for instance, has long argued that Latin American immigration is solving America's racial problem, which he sees as resulting from the traditional American "one drop of blood" rule of thumb for determining race. South of the border, in contrast, racial lines are not as distinctly drawn.

Yet after almost 500 years of intermarriage, most of Latin America still has a quite white ruling class. Darker men who rise up in society tend to marry fairer women, so their descendents are lighter-looking. Thus the genes of the successful rabble-rousers and self-made men get absorbed into the overclass.

It remains to be seen whether Hispanics turn the rest of America away from the one drop of blood theory or vice-versa. Certainly, contra Will, Obama has only benefited from his ardent embrace of the one-drop rule. Although the candidate was raised by the white side of his family in multiracial Hawaii, where mixed-race children have been unexceptional for generations, he strenuously rejected Hawaiian haziness about racial identity. Obama moved to the black slums of Chicago to work as an ethnic activist, joined a stridently Afrocentrist church, and then went into discrimination law so he could sue white-run institutions. The lessons for ambitious young Hispanics would seem clear: ethnic solidarity among minorities is the American way to political success.

Latinos now have a full complement of civil-rights organizations, such as the National Council of La Raza (The Race), modeled on the black prototypes and usually well-subsidized by establishment heavyweights such as the Ford Foundation. Still, copying the black grievance machine hasn't quite paid off as well as Latino activists had hoped. The institu-

tions are staffed by would-be Alberto Sharptons and Jesus Jacksons, but these leaders tend to lack followers. For example, Hispanic politicians' protests over Clinton firing Solis Doyle barely made a ripple. One impediment is a low level of trust of strangers, including co-ethnics, among Latinos. Harsh experience has taught Mexicans to put little faith in anyone beyond the extended family.

When millions of illegal immigrants waving Mexican flags and demanding amnesty marched in the streets of America in the spring of 2006, the English-language media was baffled as to which shadowy leaders had turned these throngs out. (The chief answer proved unexciting: funny disc jockeys on Spanish-language radio stations.) And when the illegal aliens didn't show up at the 2007 marches, the English-language media didn't know why either.

The language barrier is one clear reason for the charisma gap between African-Americans and Latinos. Yet the Manhattan-Beltway center-right pundits' assumption that Hispanics are all new immigrants who will assimilate seamlessly as soon as they learn English is wrong. For example, Sen. Ken Salazar

claims his ancestors arrived in Santa Fe before the Mayflower landed at Plymouth Rock. Hispanics have a long history in America, yet other Americans haven't much noticed, which allows white intellectuals to make up whatever theories they prefer *a priori* about what Hispanic immigration portends.

In contrast, African-American history does not lack publicity. A new study by a Stanford researcher asked 2,000 high-school juniors and seniors to name the ten most famous Americans who weren't presidents. The top three were Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Harriet Tubman. Although Hispanics now make up over one-fifth of public school students, there were no Spanish surnames on this top-ten list.

Neither do they make much impact at the ballot box. Many are illegal aliens. Moreover, legal immigrants from Mexico are less likely than any other nationality to bother becoming U.S. citizens. (Although American whites tend to see Mexico as tragic and comic, Mexican immigrants love their native land and dream of returning home for their retirement.) And Mexican-American citizens are less likely to register and vote. They

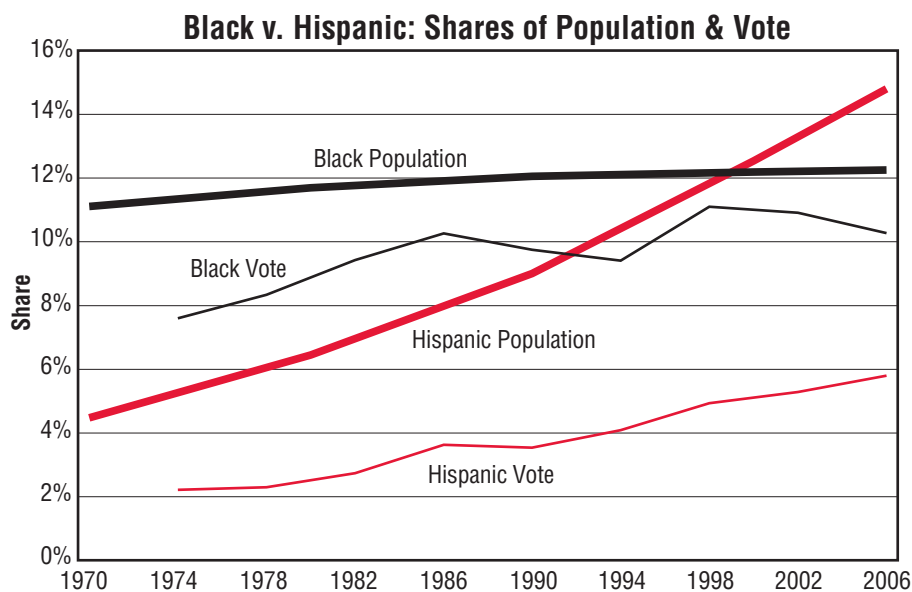
tend to find the drama of their private lives more compelling than public affairs.

Hispanics do find their way to the polls in the presidential elections at slightly higher percentages than in the more boring midterm races—6.0 percent in 2004, up from 5.4 percent in 2000. Still, it's unlikely they will reach 7.0 percent of voters in 2008. Plus, the Mexican-American vote is concentrated in Democratic California and Republican Texas, so the Electoral College makes them less important in presidential elections than even their overall paltry numbers suggest.

Nor are illegal aliens a hot-button issue for Latinos, as Obama discovered to his pain in California where he campaigned in favor of issuing drivers licenses to illegal aliens, while Hillary was on record as being opposed. A 2002 Pew-Kaiser poll of 2,929 registered Hispanic voters found 48 percent believe there are too many immigrants in this country, while only 7 percent said there are too few.

But when the pollsters rephrased the question to specifically mention "Latin American immigrants," the Hispanic voters switched, with 36 percent now saying "Allow more" and only 21 percent choosing "Reduce the number." Evidently, while immigration can be exploited as an emotional ethnic pride issue among Hispanic voters, on objective grounds most Latino voters are negative toward illegal aliens. After all, they bear the brunt of the lower wages, overcrowded housing, and overwhelmed public schools and hospitals. However, their ambivalence toward illegal immigration is not reflected among their self-appointed leaders, whose interest lies in simply boosting the number of warm brown bodies they can claim to represent.

In general, Hispanic voters tend to be old-fashioned tax-and-spend Democrats. In the Pew-Kaiser poll, 60 percent of Hispanics said they "would prefer to pay higher taxes to support a larger government that provides more services"



compared to 35 percent of whites. Tax-and-spend politics reflect self-interest on the part of Hispanics since they tend to cluster below the national average in income and education. And they do not get much more conservative as they go up the income ladder, perhaps because higher education means more exposure to the multiculturalist mindset reigning on college campuses.

Mexican immigrants don't bring much human capital with them. The Census Bureau recently estimated that while more than 40 percent of recent immigrants from India have an advanced degree, only about 1 percent of Mexican immigrants do. In fact, over 60 percent of Mexican immigrants have less than a high school diploma. While about 20 percent of African immigrants work in "science, engineering, technology, or health," only about 1 percent of Mexicans do. Those who have what it takes to make it big in Mexico stay home. That may help explain why there are so few high-profile Mexican-Americans.

Pundits frequently claim that Hispanics either will or will not "assimilate," although this always begs the question "assimilate toward whom?" It's hard for many white intellectuals to remember that there are people in this world whose highest aspiration is *not* to Be Like Me.

Some Latino youths, for instance, are attracted by the glamour of African-American norms. For example, the Hispanic illegitimacy rate has grown from 19 percent in 1980 to 50 percent in 2006 (compared to 71 percent for blacks and 27 percent for whites).

That middle position is characteristic. In recent decades, Latinos have generally fallen midway between whites and blacks on most social statistics. For instance, the Hispanic imprisonment rate is 2.9 times the white imprisonment rate, while the black rate is 7.2 times more. (In contrast, the Asian imprisonment rate is only 0.22 as high.)

Latin American immigrant families tend to make strong educational progress from the first generation to the second. After that, things slow down. In 1992, the last time the National Assessment of Educational Progress test asked if students were born in the U.S., the school achievement test gap between whites and American-born Hispanics was two-thirds as large as the notoriously deleterious one between the whites and blacks.

In addition, some behavior gets worse as immigrants assimilate—illegitimacy goes up and the crime rate appears to be significantly higher among American-born Hispanics. In reality, assimilation isn't a black or white question but a statistical one. We can be sure that some Hispanics will assimilate toward middle-class white lives, some toward underclass black customs, and many will continue to follow working-class Hispanic traditions.

Consider New Mexico, which has been home to Hispanics for four centuries and is now 44 percent Latino. Although it's on the border, it doesn't attract as many immigrants as Arizona, so its assimilated Hispanics should be doing well, right? In 2007, Tim Russert humiliated New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson on "Meet the Press" by reading off New Mexico's ranking among the 50 states on a scale where one is best:

Percent of people living below the poverty line, you're 48. Percent of children below, 48. Median family income, 47. People without health insurance, 49. Children without health insurance, 46. Teen high school dropouts, 47. Death rate due to firearms, 48. Violent crime rate, 46.

Of course, it's hardly Richardson's fault that in five years as governor, he hadn't succeeded in turning New Mexicans into Minnesotans.

The sheer size of the upcoming Hispanic population makes the statistics ominous. Assume that Hispanic individ-

uals are only, say, one-third as likely as African-Americans to fall into the underclass. That's not so bad, right? Yet in 40 years, there will be three times as many Hispanics as there are blacks today, so the Latino underclass would then be as big as the black underclass is today.

It would be imprudent to assume that Hispanics in America will forever remain politically quiescent under uncharismatic leaders. There is tremendous pressure from within America on Hispanics to follow the path of blacks in politicizing their grievances and developing a culture of rejection. A young high-school history teacher in Arizona told me that he had initially been disturbed when his Latino students accused him of racism: "Why can't I turn in my homework late? You let Julio turn his in late. That's racist!" He finally realized, though, that "racist" was simply the word they had been taught by American culture to mean "unfair."

Nor is Latin American history uniformly dull. It's actually quite unpredictable. For example, after more than three decades of stable, unchallenged rule, the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz was suddenly overthrown in 1911. The Mexican Revolution went on to kill perhaps one million people. As he fled to exile in Paris, Díaz is said to have reflected, like a proto-Yogi Berra, "In Mexico, nothing ever happens until it happens."

Similarly, much of Latin America is currently excited over the rise of leftist populist *presidentes* preaching racial resentment, such as Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia.

Whether this "wind from the south" will ever reach America is impossible to foresee, but we may eventually be living in interesting times. ■

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Bloody Borders

On his African tour, President Bush deplored the genocide in Rwanda, defended his refusal to send U.S. troops to Darfur, and decried the ethnic slaughter in Kenya.

Following a fraudulent election, the Kikuyu, the dominant tribe in Kenya, have been subjected to merciless assault. People are separating and butchering one another along lines of blood and soil.

According to a compelling lead article in the new *Foreign Affairs*, “Us and Them: The Enduring Power of Ethnic Nationalism,” we may be witnessing in the Third World a re-enactment of the ethnic wars that tore Europe to pieces in the 20th century.

“Ethnonationalism,” writes history professor Jerry Z. Muller of Catholic University, “has played a more profound role in modern history than is commonly understood, and the processes that led to the dominance of the ethnonational state and the separation of ethnic groups in Europe are likely to recur elsewhere.” Western Man has mistaught himself his own history.

Writes Muller: “A familiar and influential narrative of 20th-century European history argues that nationalism twice led to war, in 1914 and then again in 1939. Thereafter, the story goes, Europeans concluded that nationalism was a danger and gradually abandoned it. In the postwar decades, Western Europeans enmeshed themselves in a web of transnational institutions, culminating in the European Union.”

Muller contends that this is a myth, that peace came to the Old Continent only after the triumph of ethnonationalism, after the peoples of Europe had sorted themselves out and each achieved his own home.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there were three multi-ethnic empires in Europe: the Ottoman, Russian and Austro-Hungarian. The ethnonationalist Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 tore at the first. World War I was ignited by Serbs seeking to rip Bosnia away from Austria-Hungary. After four years of slaughter, the Serbs succeeded, and ethnonationalism triumphed in Europe.

Out of the dead Ottoman Empire came the ethnonationalist state of Turkey and an ethnic transfer of populations between Ankara and Athens. Armenians were massacred and expelled from Turkey.

Out of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires came Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. In the latter three nations, however, a majority ethnic group ruled minorities that wished either their own national home or to join lost kinsmen.

In Poland, there were Ukrainians, Germans, Lithuanians and Jews. In Czechoslovakia, half the population was German, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, Ruthenian, or Jewish. In Yugoslavia were Slovenes, Croats, Bosnians, Serbs, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and Albanians.

The second World War came out of Hitler’s attempt to unite all Germans in one ethnonational home—thus the Anschluss with Austria, the demand for return of the Sudeten Deutsch, and the pressure on Poland to return the Germans’ lost city of Danzig and for Lithuania to give back German Memel and the Memelland it seized in 1923.

World War II advanced the process in the most horrible of ways. The Jews of Europe, with no national home, perished or fled to create one in Israel. The Germans of the Baltic states, Prussia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Balkans, and their own eastern provinces, almost to Berlin, were expelled in the most brutal act of ethnic cleansing in history—13-15 million Germans, of whom 2 million perished in the exodus.

At the end of World War II, Europe’s nations were more ethnically homogeneous than they had ever been, at a horrendous cost in blood.

After 45 years of Cold War, the remaining multi-ethnic states—the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia—broke up into more than two dozen nation-states, all rooted in ethnonationalism.

As Muller argues, ethnonationalism may be a precondition of liberal democracy. Only after all the tribes of Europe had their own ethnically homogeneous nation-states did peace and comity come. And what happened in Europe in the 20th century may be a precursor of what is to come in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Americans, writes Muller, “find ethnonationalism discomfiting both intellectually and morally. Social scientists go to great lengths to demonstrate that this is a product not of nature but of culture. ... But none of this will make ethnonationalism go away.”

Indeed, we see it bubbling up from the Basque country of Spain to Belgium, Bolivia, Baghdad and Beirut. Perhaps the wisest counsel for the U.S. may be to get out of the way of this elemental force. Rather than seek to halt the inexorable, we should seek to accommodate it and ameliorate its sometimes awful consequences. ■

The McCain Court

Appointing conservative judges would undermine the maverick's legislative legacy.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

THE PROSPECT of overturning *Roe v. Wade* may be only incentive powerful enough to turn a disillusioned conservative into a motivated McCain voter this November. After the betrayals of the Bush era, many on the Right still point to the ascendance of John Roberts and Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court and proclaim, "It was worth it." Campaigning across the country, McCain promises conservative audiences, "We're going to have justices like Roberts and Alito." And Sen. John Cornyn told the *New York Times* that judges "are the one issue that cuts across all aspects of the Republican coalition," saying that in the run up to November, "I will encourage him to make it a prominent part of his pitch."

But will the Arizonan make good and usher in a conservative majority on the Court? Unlikely. Republicans hoping to rally their dispirited base in 2008 can find little evidence that John McCain is interested in effecting a judicial counter-revolution. Though there will probably be multiple vacancies in the Supreme Court in the next presidential term—John Paul Stevens turns 88 this April; Ruth Bader Ginsburg is 74; Anthony Kennedy is 71—McCain has never made the judiciary a central theme of his campaign.

Given the chance to join conservatives in disarming Democratic opposition to conservative judges, McCain compromised. Lacking incentives to appoint strict constructionists, his attitude toward judicial conservatives runs between indifference and hostility. And while McCain dutifully praises Roberts and Alito in public, he some-

times questions their rulings—particularly when they threaten to overturn his legislative legacy.

Reacting to the disappointing appointees of Reagan and Bush I, the Right adopted a "No More Souters" mantra. By insisting that judges need a verifiable record of strict constitutionalism in order to be appointed, conservative activists helped scuttle the abysmal Harriet Miers nomination. It is difficult to see how, after launching such a full-throated mutiny against her, they could accept McCain, whose answer to the impasse over Bush's judicial nominees was to elevate himself as a moderate powerbroker.

In 2005, when Democrats threatened to filibuster the president's appointees, conservatives countered that the Constitution requires only a majority vote for confirmation—not the 60 votes needed to invoke cloture. They argued that the filibuster itself represented an unconstitutional addition to the simple "advise and consent" role envisioned in our founding documents. Grassroots conservatives urged Republicans to exercise the "nuclear option" whereby the presiding officer—in this case Vice President Cheney—could invoke a little used procedural device and proceed to an up-or-down vote with only majority consent.

Rather than contending with the constitutional question, McCain joined Democrat Ben Nelson to form the Gang of 14. The seven participating Democrats agreed that for the duration of the 109th Congress they would no longer vote with their party to filibuster judicial nominees except in "extraordinary cir-

cumstances"; in turn the seven Republicans would refuse to vote with then Majority Leader Bill Frist on the "nuclear option." For hardcore conservatives, the Gang of 14, though expedient to confirm Roberts and Alito, placed principle second to bipartisan accommodation. Even today, McCain admits that his deal with Democrats ensured that several of Bush's appointments to federal appeals courts were permanently sidelined.

Judicial nominations were one of Bush's reliably conservative selling points. But McCain is not similarly beholden to the traditional Republican base. Bush could attribute his 2004 victory to evangelical Christians, and he received support from movement conservatives throughout his presidency. This will not be McCain's story. When he called evangelical leaders "agents of intolerance," he became a media darling. Over the past seven years, McCain's leading critics have been movement conservatives, and he won the nomination of his party against the bitter opposition of talk radio. Bush could be persuaded that the health of his party depended on judicial appointments that satisfied his core constituency. McCain's career has taught him that success comes from ignoring or opposing conservatives. Far from looking out for their interests, he will be focused on his own—safeguarding the measures that defined his Senate career.

McCain would be the first president in the modern era to come into office with major legislative accomplishments at the federal level. As conservative legal

blogger Ilya Somin wrote at “The Volokh Conspiracy”, “a President McCain would face a difficult tradeoff between the goal of appointing conservative jurists and the goal of saving the McCain-Feingold law from invalidation by the Court.”

Protecting a senator’s legacy is rarely the assigned duty of a Supreme Court justice, but it isn’t unprecedented. Franklin Roosevelt, notorious for his conflicts with the High Court, appointed Hugo Black, a Democratic senator from Alabama and key ally on New Deal legislation. Black went on to reverse the Court’s trend of overruling the battery of programs he and FDR championed.

While McCain heaps praise on Roberts and Alito on the campaign trail, he surely realizes these two justices are doing more than any others to erase his proudest legislative achievement, campaign finance reform.

When McCain-Feingold passed, conservatives, particularly pro-lifers and gun-rights activists, wailed in perfect harmony with Rush Limbaugh, Sean Hannity, and other radio voices of the Right. The legislation threatened to regulate grassroots activism leading up to elections. After initial Supreme Court decisions ratified the legislation, George Will lamented, “The First Amendment is now permanently in play, its protections to be truncated whenever congressional majorities envision short-term partisan advantages.” But in 2007, the Supreme Court gutted McCain-Feingold in *FEC v. Wisconsin Right to Life*. Justices Roberts and Alito co-wrote the majority opinion in the 5-4 decision, striking down key restrictions on political activism. McCain called the decision “regrettable” and lamented that the Court had “carved out a narrow exception by which some corporate and labor expenditures can be used to target a federal candidate in the days and weeks before an election.”

Entering the Oval Office may change McCain’s perspective. Conservative legal scholar Steven Presser maintains that, if elected, McCain would build a legacy apart from the legislature: “If I were McCain, and I were the president, I would be much more interested in establishing a legacy as president (by appointing good solid judges) than in preserving my legislative legacy. ... The fact that he’s running for president, I think, means that he thinks that’s more important than his current job.”

But Republicans wagering that McCain will build a more conservative judiciary should pause over recent reports that he may not be enthusiastic about Bush’s appointments after all. John Fund wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that McCain has said he was happy with John Roberts, but might “draw the line on a Samuel Alito, because ‘he wore his conservatism on his sleeve.’” While the McCain campaign vigorously denied the allegation, Robert Novak confirmed it in his column using different sources. In a private chat with conservative jurists, one lawyer asked McCain, “Wouldn’t it be great if you get a chance to name somebody like Roberts and Alito?” McCain answered, “Well, certainly Roberts,” before expressing his doubts about Alito to his shocked audience.

In one Republican presidential debate, McCain expressed admiration for his fellow Arizonan Sandra Day O’Connor. Asked whether he would appoint a justice like her, he averred, “I’m not going to second-guess Ronald Reagan.” While conservatives have gleefully denounced O’Connor for over a decade, McCain couldn’t even make the easy concession that he was sometimes disappointed with her rulings.

McCain’s inability to distinguish between Sandra Day O’Connor and the strict constructionists he vows to appoint is no surprise. Much as activists

on the Right agitate about judges, there is no reason to suspect McCain shares their concern. Constitutional lawyer Bruce Fein notes, “He has never spoken out or paid serious attention to the issue and never served on the Judiciary Committee. That makes you nervous. Someone who doesn’t see the importance of the judiciary doesn’t understand the system.” Looking over McCain’s legislative record, Fein sees reason to doubt that he will appoint strict constructionists: “McCain is not someone who thinks seriously about philosophy of government. ... He’s incapable of thinking that deeply about separation of powers.”

The danger for conservatives is that McCain’s attitude toward the judiciary, characterized either by self-interest or ignorance, means he may well trade his judicial appointments for support of his own pet projects. The *New York Times* noted, “some Republicans say they fear that a President McCain, faced with a Democratic Congress, could use judicial appointments as a bargaining chip to achieve policy compromises.” Fein echoes this judgment: “Unless a president wants to make judges an important part of this mission, he sells them.”

For many conservatives, judicial nominations were the last reason to vote for a party that consistently flouted their principles on foreign policy, immigration, and the size of government. Now that the GOP is nominating a man who often led those dismal efforts, can the Right convince itself this time? McCain’s uneven support for Bush’s nominees and his incoherence on judicial matters doesn’t bode well for conservatives hoping to overturn *Roe* or other artifacts of the Warren Court. “But,” the pundits will say, “think of Obama’s appointments.” Fein sighs at the logic of diminishing expectations: “If you asked me: on judges would McCain be better than Obama? Then yes. That would be a very low bar.” ■

Obama's Israel Test

Is the lobby losing its grip?

By Scott McConnell

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK for a bold presidential bid, the young Democratic senator set up a meeting with a key leader of the Jewish community. He had won substantial Jewish support in his home state, but as a first term, he was not yet well known nationally. Sitting down with a prominent Chicago developer, the senator averred that he hoped to make progress on the Palestinian refugee situation.

The rebuke to John F. Kennedy came instantly. Philip Klutznick told him, "If you are going to run for the presidency, and that is what you are going to say, count me out and count a lot of other people out too." Kennedy counted Klutznick in, shortly thereafter giving a speech lavishly praising Israel and dropping the refugee question for the duration of his campaign.

Once elected, he did broach the issue during a state visit with David Ben-Gurion, and subsequently floated a plan that would allow some Palestinians to return home. The Israeli prime minister was not enthusiastic, calling the Kennedy proposal "a more serious danger to Israel's existence than all the threats of the Arab dictators and kings." Leaders in the American Jewish community campaigned vigorously against the initiative, which was quietly dropped. Disappointed in his effort to reach an entente with Egypt's Nassar, Kennedy offered high-tech Hawk missiles to Israel, beginning the process of turning the United States into Israel's chief arms supplier and laying the foundation for the present bilateral relationship.

Several wars and many billions of aid dollars later, the politics of Israel-Palestine are not exactly the same as 50 years ago but not that different either. Israel is more powerful and more dependent on American largesse. Americans are far more deeply engaged in the Middle East and for the most part are not happy about it. And American Jews still play a large, perhaps preponderant, role in Democratic Party fundraising.

On the surface, the tie between Barack Obama and Israel's establishment supporters is warm and comfortable, as it would be for almost any major Democratic candidate. Last year the Illinois senator spoke at AIPAC's annual conference—"a small group of friends" by his description—and described a recent trip to Israel, his ride in an IDF helicopter, the horror of Hezbollah rockets, the great threat to the United States and Israel posed by Iran. Israel was America's "strongest ally" in the region. Obama mentioned the peace process, but assured his listeners that he would neither "drag" Israel to the negotiating table nor "dictate" what would be best for the Jewish state's security. The speech, if not the paean to right-wing Zionism delivered by John Hagee or Dick Cheney, was still well received.

Nonetheless, there is a sense among the Jewish establishment that all is not as it seems—and if the view has not yet crystallized that Obama has a less Israel-centric perception of the Middle East than any major party nominee since Eisenhower, there is foreboding that the times are a-changin'.

That Obama has an Israel issue is not only being stressed by smear artists anonymously circulating emails that the senator is a "secret Muslim." It's also a worry percolating at the highest levels of the Jewish establishment. Listen to Malcolm Hoenlein, head of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, at a press conference last month in Jerusalem: "All the talk about change, but without defining what the change should be, is an opening for all kinds of mischief." It's not Obama himself, Hoenlein assured. He has plenty of Jewish supporters and advisers. But, he added, "there is legitimate concern about the zeitgeist of the campaign." Obama, he worried, had criticized Hillary for putting Iran's Revolutionary Guard on the list of terrorist organizations. Overall support for Israel is broad yet thin, he warned, adding that an increasing number of Americans see the Jewish state as a "dark and militaristic place."

Israel's former ambassador to Washington Danny Ayalon added his concern, chastising Obama for failing to clarify how he would ensure Israel's "Qualitative Military Edge" if elected. Abe Foxman of the Anti Defamation League called on Obama to either change the views of his pastor Jeremiah Wright (anti-Israel, Foxman says with apparent evidence) or leave his church. Thus far Obama has done neither. A confidential memo circulated inside the American Jewish Committee asserted that Obama's Mideast views "raise questions." Singled out as worry points were Obama's call for diplomacy with Tehran and the fact that in 1998 he attended a

dinner keynoted by the now deceased Columbia University professor Edward Said, a Palestinian whose prestige has long irritated neoconservatives. (On the Web one can find a photo of Obama, in a black shirt and sports jacket, chatting amiably with the more conventionally business-suited Columbia don.)

These sallies were couched in the always well-modulated language of the Jewish establishment, written by people inclined to persuade Obama, not criticize him. The tried and true Philip Klutznick method. Not so, however, the more polemical wings of the lobby. The neoconservative webzine *American Thinker* has turned unmasking what it deems Obama's hostility to Israel into a central editorial focus. Editor Ed Lasky cautions readers not to make too much of Obama's pro-Israel speeches. "I was there," he wrote of the AIPAC address, "just a few yards in front of Barack Obama. His speech was desultory ... lacking the spirit and energy that are ... [his] trademark. He clearly seemed to be going through the motions."

MALLEY AND BRZEZINSKI REALLY DO BELIEVE IN A TWO-STATE SOLUTION TO THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN MESS.

The root of the concern, echoed by *The New Republic's* Marty Peretz and others, is that some members of Obama's foreign-policy team are not full-fledged Israel partisans. Those most frequently cited are former top Carter aide Zbigniew Brzezinski, Samantha Power, and Robert Malley. The latter, who has at most a tangential tie to the campaign, was a member of Bill Clinton's negotiating team at Camp David in 2000, who later claimed in a much-noted essay in the *New York Review of Books* that the famous best offer ever given to Yasser Arafat was flawed and was not even a solid offer. Power has become famous as the prize-winning

author of a book on the Rwanda genocide and as an advocate of muscular "humanitarian" intervention. Brzezinski, in his late seventies, is still a Washington wise man and one of the few in the Beltway establishment to have come away from the Iraq debacle with an enhanced reputation. He and the Obama campaign say his role is minimal, though that has not stopped Alan Dershowitz from demanding that Zbig be dropped, counsel that Obama has ignored. Brzezinski draws fire because for three decades he has quietly advocated that the United States take the initiative in outlining its vision of a Palestinian-Israeli settlement, an arrangement more difficult to envision now, after Israel has moved 400,000 settlers into the West Bank, than when he first recommended it.

Malley and Brzezinski really do believe in a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian mess—they aren't merely, in the manner of the Bush administration, paying lip service to the idea while ignoring Israeli actions that effectively strangle Palestinian statehood in its cradle. Whether Obama would

appoint people of like mind to key policy positions or listen to their advice is anyone's guess. He probably has not thought much about it. Still, it is undeniable that he actually knows people who embrace the Palestinian cause: there is that dinner with Edward Said, and one of his colleagues at the University of Chicago was Rashid Khalidi, the Palestinian scholar now at Columbia. This may be a first for a major party nominee.

These elements alone will probably ensure that if Obama is the nominee, Israel-Palestine will be a topic in the general election. Those already attacking his advisers—Marty Peretz, *The American*

Thinker, the *Commentary* blog—will raise the volume on their efforts. Obama and his allies will initially try to deflect the blows but will eventually be forced to argue back. Jews who support a two-state solution—who have long taken a backseat to AIPAC and the neoconservatives—will find their voices amplified through a major presidential campaign. So will Arab-Americans who support Obama. For the first time in a presidential race, the Israel-Palestine issue will consist of something other than two men squabbling over who will more rapidly overrule the State Department and absolutely positively move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

A welcome corollary will be realization that there are different ways for Americans to be "pro-Israel" and push back against the view that being pro-Israel means supporting the right of the Jewish state to lord it over 5 million Palestinians in conditions increasingly seen as resembling South African apartheid. The alternative view won't sweep the country, but it will migrate from its present home on university campuses and liberal Protestant churches into the wider body politic.

Finally will come recognition that the Israel lobby's power to dominate the American debate is beginning to weaken. It remains considerable, but two of its pillars are cracked: the ability to successfully intimidate and the capacity to plausibly threaten a cut-off of campaign funds. Obama ignored requests of Messieurs Dershowitz and Foxman and the world didn't stop. His internet fundraising has already generated anxious murmurings. "It's easier to get credit as a community if there's a Jewish fundraising event or a bundler who is known to reach out to our community," one Clinton backer told the *Forward*. "Online it's harder." Especially, one might add, when the new method is wildly outperforming the traditional approach. ■

Model Citizens

Beyond the realist vs. idealist divide

By Leon Hadar

THE DEBATE OVER the Iraq War has been portrayed as a clash between realists and idealists. According to this popular plotline, realists pursue security policy based on hard national interest, whereas idealists are committed to a diplomatic approach that advances more abstract concerns.

Thus realists such as Brent Scowcroft and John Mearsheimer insisted that their opposition to the invasion was grounded in the recognition that occupying Iraq would harm central U.S. geostrategic and geoeconomic concerns. Those pushing for war, like Paul Wolfowitz and Bernard Lewis, integrated their support into an ambitious narrative in which Iraq would be transformed into a model of political and economic freedom and a base for expanding Western forms of government in the Middle East.

Op-ed writers and media personalities, needing to condense arguments over complex issues into easy soundbites, fall easily into the habit of using what the late German sociologist Max Weber referred to as “Ideal Type.” As he defined it, “An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct.” Or, in simple English, typecasting is the last refuge of the pundit.

So the argument over America’s foreign policy is portrayed as a realist-versus-idealist showdown, though many

Realpolitik types often exhibit a powerful idealistic bent, while romantically inclined idealists frequently adopt survival-of-the-fittest strategies. Notice how Scowcroft and Mearsheimer sound idealistic when they insist that America should use its power to bring peace to the Holy Land. (They argue it’s in U.S. national interest to do so.) Or you might find yourself facing an acute case of cognitive dissonance when you hear John Bolton and Richard Perle described as the sort of “idealists” who wanted to plant the seeds of democracy in Iraq. Aren’t these the same guys who pride themselves on being hardheaded nationalists, if not cynical Machiavellians? And, indeed, the two stress that their support for Bush’s grand designs in Iraq and the Middle East was based on unsentimental analysis of U.S. interests. (From their very unique realist perspective, U.S. national interests happen correspond neatly to Israel’s.)

You may sound realistic, if not cynical, if you oppose the use of American military power to prevent genocide in Darfur, but then you’re transformed into an idealist when you back the application of U.S. military might to protect democratic Israel and Taiwan. It all depends on how you define national interest.

But let’s be realistic and admit that we don’t have the airtime and newspaper space to discuss issues by referring to Scowcroft as the “proponent of war against Iraq when it invades Kuwait but not when it is gassing Kurds” or describing John Bolton as an “advocate of using military power to promote democracy in Iraq and Iran but not in Saudi Arabia or

Egypt. Typecasting is cost-effective and in many ways entertaining since it assumes a confrontation between two “schools of thought” as opposed to “a somewhat dull debate involving many complex arguments over the use of diplomatic, military, and economic power.”

Seeking a middle ground, historian Walter Russell Mead provided a nuanced typology of the foreign-policy debate in his *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. He proposed four schools of American foreign-policy thought that he named after three U.S. presidents—Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and Woodrow Wilson—and the first secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton. This election cycle saw each of these predilections ably represented in the Republican field.

Libertarians would find themselves at home and more importantly, not abroad, with the Jeffersonians, whose main concern is the protection of domestic liberty. They stress that foreign entanglements damage the American constitutional system, centralizing power in Washington, increasing the power of the executive branch, weakening the power of Congress and the states, and amassing huge deficits while creating an environment in which the central government imposes restrictions on free speech in the name of national security. Jeffersonians believe in a form American exceptionalism that acts as a political and economic inspiration for people around the world—the Shining City on the Hill, not a crusader that searches for monsters abroad or tries to plant utopias.

Enter Ron Paul. Like the early Jeffersonians, he is a deficit hawk who believes that wars aimed at opening markets or “protecting access to energy resources” increase the national debt, benefit mainly the bankers, and oppress the citizenry with higher taxes. As a Jeffersonian, Paul could be described as a “minimalist realist.” (After all, Jefferson did do foreign policy.) America needs brilliant diplomats who will solve our global problems with minimal risk—not secret warriors masquerading as diplomats who aim to advance the interests of Big Business and the Military-Industrial Complex.

Then there are the Jacksonians, who are sometimes mistaken for Jeffersonians (and vice-versa). Mike Huckabee would feel comfortable with these guys who tend to be looked down upon by foreign-policy elites despite the fact that, by the numbers, they—Jim Webb’s Scots-Irish—constitute the silent majority. Their slogan is “Don’t Tread On Me!” and their driving belief is that the priority of the government in both foreign and domestic policy is the physical security and economic well-being of the American populace. Jacksonians argue that the U.S. shouldn’t seek foreign quarrels, but if a war starts, then “there is no substitute for victory,” and all resources must be mobilized to ensure our triumph.

Huckabee believed that the Iraq War made sense when it was defined in terms of protecting the American homeland from terrorist attacks and nuclear strikes. Perhaps in retrospect it was a mistake. But now we don’t have a choice but to achieve victory—and only then return home. In the long run, Huckabee, who like most Jacksonians tends to be skeptical of free-trade arguments, believes Americans can develop a powerful economic base without relying on foreign oil.

Mitt Romney, like George H.W. Bush, Richard Nixon, and Bill Clinton, is a typical Hamiltonian who puts an emphasis on the economic primacy of the United

States. Hamiltonians believe that close ties between Big Government and Big Business are an integral part of the American ethos and a key to the survival and success of the country. Unlike the Jeffersonians and the Jacksonians, they favor an activist U.S. foreign policy that makes the world safe, not necessarily for democracy (see the Wilsonians below), but for their business partners at, say, oil companies. The U.S. should be integrated in the global economy on favorable terms through multilateral institutions such as the UN and the World Bank, by free-trade accords, and through balance of power strategies that help maintain American status as *primus inter pares* among other nations.

Romney wouldn’t have invaded Iraq to spread democracy in the Middle East. But he would have made sure that our exit from Iraq did not harm U.S. access to the oil resources in the Persian Gulf or weaken the United States’ position vis-à-vis other great powers. His main focus would have been on establishing a stable relationship with China, which is becoming corporate America’s main frontier.

Now it’s time to meet the Wilsonians. They believe that our moral and national interests are served by spreading American democratic and social values throughout the world. We have had peaceful Wilsonians like Jimmy Carter (and perhaps Barack Obama) who want to use American diplomatic and economic power to expand co-operation among members of the “international community” through the force of globalization. They would use military power to prevent genocide, but not to promote strategic and economic interests.

Then there are the Wilsonian warriors, including Wilson himself, who hoped that a military victory in World War I would “make the world safe for democracy,” and George W. Bush with his vision of freedom on the march

across the planet. Bush’s designated successor, John McCain, seems to share the view that American military power should be used to achieve that goal.

It is perhaps more useful to think in terms of Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, Hamiltonian, or Wilsonian foreign policies, than the realist versus idealist model. But these four schools of thought still only represent ideal types. Jefferson himself was not completely Jeffersonian, as he demonstrated with the Louisiana Purchase, and he co-operated occasionally with Hamiltonians (the Monroe Doctrine). Bush I was a Hamiltonian who exhibited the characteristics of a warrior Wilsonian, not unlike the Hamiltonian Clinton’s decision to intervene in Yugoslavia. Ronald Reagan was a Hamiltonian who combined a Realpolitik approach to great powers (the Soviet Union) with Wilsonian rhetoric (the Reagan Doctrine) and Jacksonian escapades (Grenada and Lebanon), tempered by Jeffersonian instincts (withdrawal from Lebanon and negotiations with Mikhail Gorbachev).

George W. Bush sounded Jeffersonian during his 2000 debate with Al Gore when he promised a “humble foreign policy.” But he was transformed into a Wilsonian-Jacksonian crossdresser who at the end of his term seems to be embracing a more Hamiltonian approach.

So while much of John McCain’s rhetoric sounds Wilsonian, it’s not inconceivable that the limits of our military and economic power could also force him in a more Hamiltonian direction. One could imagine that McCain’s National Security Council would turn into a forum for debate between Wilsonians and Hamiltonians—and one would hope that the Hamiltonians win out. Ideally speaking, that is. ■

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Bull in the China Shop

The U.S. is betting that a rich PRC will be democratic. Beijing disagrees.

By Eamonn Fingleton

TWO BETS ARE ON THE TABLE. One has been placed by the Washington establishment, the other by the Chinese Communist Party.

Analyzing China's prospects in terms of fashionable globalist ideology, Washington is betting that a rich China will be a free one. The theory is that the only way China can continue to grow is by embracing Western democracy and capitalism. Moreover, the very process of China's enrichment is supposedly undermining the Beijing government's authoritarianism. More wealth means more freedom means more wealth.

Here is how President George W. Bush has put it: "As China reforms its economy, its leaders are finding that once the door to freedom is opened even a crack, it cannot be closed. As the people of China grow in prosperity, their demands for political freedom will grow as well."

Similar optimism pours forth from the American press. The *Wall Street Journal* has commented: "Sooner or later China's economic progress will create the internal conditions for a more democratic regime that will be more stable, and less of a potential global rival."

The Washington view has become so widely accepted that almost no one has noticed that there is a second bet on the table—that of the Chinese leadership. It is wagering on a disturbingly different outcome: that a future China can be both rich and authoritarian.

If Washington is right, the future is unclouded, and a fast-rising China can readily be accommodated within the

existing Western-defined world order. But what if China's leaders turn out to understand the Chinese character better than anyone in Washington? What if in 2025 or 2030 the United States finds itself facing off against a China so rich that it has surpassed all other nations in military technology yet remains resolutely opposed to Western values? The implications are hard to exaggerate.

* * *

In the great debate over China's future, Chinese leaders' jobs, if not their heads, are on the line. It is reasonable to conclude that they have considered their options carefully. Moreover, they enjoy the advantage of local knowledge. They have studied their nation's history and know its mind.

Those on the other side are pathetically uninformed. To start, they don't understand that the Chinese economic system is not capitalism, nor is it converging toward capitalism. China is operating an adaptation of the East Asian economic system. Launched by the Japanese in Manchuria in the 1930s, perfected in Japan proper in the 1950s and 1960s, this system is now widely copied throughout East Asia.

As itemized by Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro in their 1997 book, *The Coming Conflict with China*, key features of the Chinese version of the East Asian economic model include a labyrinthine system of trade barriers; an artificially undervalued currency; an industrial policy focused on developing pillar industries and using export subsi-

dies to give them competitive advantage; and pressure on foreign companies to transfer their production technologies.

In some ways, the East Asian model resembles capitalism—it makes extensive use of markets, for instance—but its fundamental logic is quite different. Whereas authoritarian political controls constitute a hindrance to growth in the West, they are really essential in the East.

Part of the West's comprehension problem is ideological: American opinion leaders hold as a matter of high ideology that Western logic is universal and thus destined to sweep the globe. It has not helped that East Asian leaders have gone to extraordinary lengths to keep their Western opposite numbers complacently misinformed.

From a Western point of view, the most glaring problem with the East Asian economic system is its mercantilist approach to trade, but the U.S. continues to unilaterally open its markets ever wider to "one-way free trade." American policymakers have allowed themselves to be persuaded that East Asian protectionism is merely a temporary adjustment problem and that an enlightened West should simply be patient while the East Asians sort things out.

In reality the East Asians have not the slightest intention of abandoning mercantilism. The point is most obvious in the case of Japan, which as the first East Asian nation to come under sustained market opening pressure from the

United States was also the first to invent highly disingenuous methods to forestall American trade negotiators. Even today Japan continues, in targeted industries at least, to pursue a comprehensively protectionist trade policy. Take cars. Despite the fact that, via an investment in Nissan, Renault of France now ostensibly controls Japan's second largest car-distribution network, there are still virtually no Renault cars on Japanese roads (and, it goes without saying, no American ones).

Japan's essential mercantilism is strongly reflected in its current account surpluses. Though largely ignored by the American press since Japan's financial bubble burst in 1990, these have continued to soar with the result that the 2007 figure, at an estimated \$201 billion, was nearly four times that of 1989, the peak year of American angst about "juggernaut Japan."

The experiences of South Korea and Taiwan also offer strong hints of China's future trajectory. Both adopted the East Asian system in the 1960s, when they ranked roughly as low as China does today in per capita income. They proceeded to enjoy some of the fastest sustained growth in history. As scholar Robert Wade documented, in both cases per capita income measured in current U.S. dollars increased more than 20 times between 1962 and 1986. If the Chinese economy were to match South Korea's 2008 income level, it would be by far the world's largest economy, with roughly twice America's total output.

Asked to identify the secret of Chinese economic growth, Western economists reflexively point to China's high savings rate. But why do the Chinese save? More important, why do they save more now than they did in the past?

American observers, by virtue of their faith in Western ideology, assume that a nation's savings rate is merely the aggregate of millions of freely made, uncoor-

dinated decisions by individual savers. This assumption totally obscures the epochal fact that Chinese leaders, in common with their counterparts elsewhere in the region, have established an ingenious, almost invisible, administrative ability to force society to save.

Dozens of government policies have been conceived to suppress consumption, thereby powerfully boosting the savings rate. This approach is hardly new. According to J.K. Galbraith, by curtailing consumption during WW II, Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration raised the American savings rate from 5 percent to 25 percent in three years. The resulting capital flows underwrote massively expanding production of everything from tanks to fighter planes.

The point was well understood by Japan scholars in the early post World War II period. As far back as the mid-1950s, Harvard-based Edwin Reischauer predicted that suppressed consumption would form the centerpiece of a massive East Asian effort to catch up with the West. History may yet come to recognize this as the most important new insight in economics since David Ricardo came up with the theory of comparative advantage, but it was all but forgotten in subsequent years, perhaps because Japan scholars sensed that frank discussion would make trouble for Japan's increasingly aggressive economic expansion program in Washington.

Depending on the methods used to suppress consumption, the increased saving sometimes arises in the household sector, sometimes in the business sector. In the latter case this occurs when artificially induced shortages of luxury goods generate huge profits for oligopolistic local suppliers. Provided such profits are reinvested, they count as part of the national savings rate. This explains the paradox that while the macroeconomic data indicates East Asians underconsume, Western media

runs stories about East Asians paying exorbitant prices for Louis Vuitton handbags or Rolex watches. While it is easy in East Asia to spend (because prices of luxuries are high), it is difficult to consume (because big spenders get little for their money). The larger economic point is that suppressed consumption creates savings. Exactly where is secondary.

Think of a drain blocked by leaves. No one leaf can stop the flow of water, but 50 leaves are a different matter. The Chinese policy depends on a panoply of constrictions on consumption:

- Trade barriers. If China does not import things, it can't consume them.
- Credit controls. Consumer credit hardly exists in China and even home loans are rare. Thus those who aspire to own household appliances or cars, let alone homes, must first save prodigiously for years or even decades so they can pay in cash.
- Anti-consumer land policies. China's zoning policies restrict home size and retail space. Home prices and rents are extraordinarily high relative to incomes, so demand for everything from heating fuel to Swedish furniture is curtailed.
- Corporate price gouging. Price-fixing cartels dominate, so living costs are higher than in other nations at a similar level of development. High prices reduce consumption directly, and the cartels' profits add to the national savings rate.
- Travel restrictions. The Chinese travel industry is tightly regulated to make it difficult and expensive to take vacations abroad.

A high savings rate is not a sufficient condition for nations to grow. It is important that they invest their savings surpluses not only productively but in

ways that avoid destabilizing capacity gluts. In China, as elsewhere in East Asia, industrial cartels help smooth the path by overseeing corporate investment plans, shutting down obsolete capacity, and fixing prices to ensure that member firms earn adequate returns on capital.

All of this requires regulatory oversight and thus a central role by government in the economic growth process.

* * *

By definition, the suppressed consumption policy means that the Chinese people's living standards constantly lag their productivity. How long will they put up with this? Most Western observers think not very long. Supposedly as living standards improve, Chinese citizens will become increasingly assertive in insisting on consumer-friendly economic policies.

This reckons without the fact that because the Chinese system is so authoritarian, no trend of any significance can develop without at least the tacit approval of those at the top. For a political challenge to achieve critical mass, individuals need some way of setting up associations and communicating with sympathizers. But independent Chinese associations, newspapers, and websites are a contradiction in terms.

China's leaders are unlikely to cooperate in their own downfall, and given that the Chinese Communist Party controls the People's Liberation Army, this would appear to settle the matter. It did at Tiananmen Square. And in any case, digital-era authoritarianism rarely has to resort to massive shows of force. Modern surveillance and communication facilitate a preferred strategy of "soft authoritarianism." Individuals who pose a threat can be identified early and taken out of circulation or rendered ineffectual through denunciation and sabotage. Yet the sort of societal meta-

morphosis apologists posit can only be driven by freely associating individuals.

In East Asia today, as always in the past, Confucianism plays a decisive role in legitimizing undemocratic, unaccountable forms of government. In the West, we think of groups as amorphous hordes. But in the East, a group is a disciplined, hierarchical entity. Not only are its leaders well defined, but their right to lead is reinforced by institutional structures. Robust methods are available to pressure anyone who wavers. If one individual steps out of line, his group can expect to be punished.

In pre-modern China, an entire family was punished for the offenses of a single member. One of the more Orwellian forms of group punishment in modern China has been identified by Steve Mosher. In his book *A Mother's Ordeal*, he writes of how the Chinese establishment whips up societal wrath against couples who flout China's one-child policy. The government threatens pay cuts for all workers in an enterprise if any of them has a second child. The effect is to co-opt hundreds of workers in pressuring a woman to have an abortion.

* * *

If the rise of Chinese power were the only thing to worry about, America's geopolitical quandary would be serious. But another, almost equally serious concern is America's precipitous decline.

Few witnesses are better placed to testify than Andrew Grove, chairman of Intel. Speaking to *Newsweek* in 2006, he said: "America ... [is going] down the tubes and the worst part is nobody knows it. They're all in denial, patting themselves on the back, as the Titanic heads for the iceberg full speed ahead."

Then there is the world's most successful investor, Warren Buffett: "The U.S. trade deficit is a bigger threat to the domestic economy than either the fed-

eral budget deficit or consumer debt and could lead to political turmoil."

Nowhere is American weakness more apparent than in advanced manufacturing. Leadership in this category has long been a *sine qua non* for a superpower. Indeed, America's mid-20th-century dominance was based on little else. But those industries have been so eviscerated that a 2005 Department of Defense report pronounced America's security at dire risk. "There is no longer a diverse base of U. S. integrated circuit fabricators capable of meeting trusted and classified chip needs," the report said. "From a U.S. national security view, the potential effects of this restructuring are so perverse and far reaching and have such opportunities for mischief that, had the United States not significantly contributed to this migration, it would have been considered a major triumph of an adversary nation's strategy to undermine U.S. military capabilities."

As corporate America loses share in world markets, other nations have been quick to fill the void, not least China. Here is a sampling of how fast China has been turning the tables on the U.S.:

1. China's foreign currency reserves are now the largest in world economic history, having multiplied more than sixfold since the end of 2001.
2. In partnership with other major East Asian central banks, the People's Bank of China effectively controls American interest rates and the value of the dollar.
3. Chinese interests have established control of the formerly American-owned Panama Canal. The key ports at either end have been bought by a Hong Kong tycoon regarded as a Beijing surrogate. He also controls ports on Mexico's Pacific coast that are playing an increasing role in shipping Chinese goods to the American market.

4. Chinese and other East Asian interests now largely control the network of satellites and undersea cables that makes up the international telecommunications system. The system had been under American control until our high-technology stock crash, when dozens of telecommunications companies on the verge of bankruptcy were bought by East Asian interests.

Many commentators insist that the U.S. is turning the corner, but the international trade figures tell a different story.

Up to a generation ago, the U.S. ranked as the world's strongest trading nation on almost every measure. Now its huge trade surpluses are a distant memory and it ranks first in a dolefully different category—as the world's largest deficit nation.

As of 2007, moreover, the U.S. was passed by China in the total value of its exports. As recently as 1996, the United States out-exported China by four to one. Japan now buys more than 60 percent as much from China as from the United States. By contrast, as recently as 1991, Japan bought nine times as much from the U.S. as from China.

Perhaps the unkindest cut of all is that the U.S. no longer even counts as China's largest source of imports: Japan holds that position, and its exports to China are twice America's.

* * *

Americans continue fondly to believe that America is changing China, but the opposite is true. Certainly Westerners who do business there are modifying their behavior—often quite troublingly—under Beijing's influence. Picture a phalanx of chocolate soldiers marching into a blowtorch.

Hitherto the most common manifestation of this phenomenon of reverse

The Central Intelligence Agency's failure to set up effective mechanisms that enable officers to encounter hostile targets overseas has meant that, in spite of seven years of trying, there has been little progress in recruiting among terrorists or weapons proliferators—a poor return on the \$34 billion annual intelligence budget.

Over the past five years, the CIA has developed 12 major "black station" cover mechanisms, mostly in Europe, and then abandoned them at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars when it was determined that they were poorly sited to carry out operations against terrorists. The new mechanisms were devised in response to Congressional pressure to diversify cover arrangements and avoid operations in embassies. They were designed to support Non-Official Cover officers, who work under cover as business professionals rather than as embassy employees. As businessmen, NOC covers need the physical presence of an office and must also be able to stand up to a certain amount of scrutiny from tax and licensing authorities. They are, therefore, much more expensive than embassy cover operatives, who merely require shifting a file in Washington. They also create a fundamental security problem because the exposure of one officer in the company effectively exposes everyone linked to it. Valerie Plame's Brewster Jennings was a business cover, and its exposure made possible the identification of other officers connected to the organization before it was shut down. This vulnerability creates another problem in that NOCs, who have no diplomatic protection, very often become reluctant to undertake operational activity for fear of blowing their covers. As a result, many traditional embassy-based intelligence officers consider NOCs to be useless.

The CIA cover staff believed that officers who were not affiliated with the embassy would have a much better chance of making contact with terrorists and their supporters. The assumption, while plausible in theory, proved incorrect in practice as American businessmen in Europe could not find terrorists, who mostly live in rural areas or safehouses in the Middle East and Central Asia. It also turned out that even in Europe terrorists and terrorism supporters do not normally move in the same circles as American businessmen, so the cover itself, which had not been thought through carefully, was inappropriate. It is believed that the cover units were set up mostly in Europe because there was a consensus that it would be nicer to live there than in the hellholes where terrorists dwell. That judgment was undoubtedly correct, but the price tag for the extended European vacation was several years of wasted effort and millions of dollars.

And cover is not the only problem. The current generation of CIA officers lacks language and personal skills that make working in Muslim cultures possible. One-year tours in Afghanistan or Iraq, largely confined to fortress-like embassies, are both poor training and demoralizing work. There are reports that one in five Agency new hires quits after the first overseas tour.

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convergence is in the fact that Western organizations increasingly do business “the Chinese way.” Not to put too fine a point on it, they allow themselves to be compromised. This generally means putting themselves on the wrong side not only of Chinese law but Western law. They are induced, for instance, to embrace Chinese business’s notorious culture of bribery and corruption. Those who try to give that culture a suitably wide berth can kiss goodbye to their hopes of ever succeeding in the fabled Chinese market. Writing from Shanghai in 2005, Peter S. Goodman of the *Washington Post* commented, “American business leaders often describe their China operations idealistically, suggesting that their presence here will compel Chinese competitors to adopt more ethical business practices. But in one key regard, the dynamic operates in reverse, with U.S. companies adopting Chinese-style tactics to secure sales, as they compete in a market in which Communist Party officials routinely control businesses, and purchasing agents consider kickbacks part of their salary.”

In the words of Carolyn Bartholomew, former chairman of the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, many American companies have made “Faustian bargains” with Beijing. She cites Yahoo!, Google, and Microsoft, which have agreed to abide by China’s censorship rules in serving Chinese Internet users. Yahoo! voluntarily handed over evidence that led to one Chinese Internet user being sentenced to ten years in prison. Bartholomew commented, “Far from capitalism changing the Chinese government, it is the Chinese government changing capitalists. Rather than the birth of freedom with telecommunications and the Internet serving as the handmaiden of democracy, we have the Internet entrepreneurs selling rope to the hangmen.”

In a world that has been drastically shrunk by fast travel and cheap telecommunications (not to mention intercontinental missiles), it is hard to see how Confucianism and Western individualism can continue to coexist as equals. By proclaiming American values not only more desirable but inherently stronger, Washington has virtually guaranteed that Beijing’s rejoinder will be a *sotto voce* “We’ll see.”

The fast developing Sino-American clash is the economic and political equivalent of a collision between matter and antimatter. Chinese leaders are generally much more discreet than they once were in rejecting American efforts to project Western values into China, but they still regard America’s democracy talk as a dire threat to their personal positions, if not to the Chinese way of life. They may not be looking for war, at least not against the world’s major nuclear powers, but they are probably mindful of Sun Tzu’s maxim: “to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

The betting is that China will penetrate American society by stealth. Building on the extensive if unobtrusive groundwork laid by earlier East Asian industrializers, China can be expected in the fullness of time to become a major factor in shaping outcomes in Washington. That won’t be as difficult as Americans might assume: the effect of globalism has been to create a political vacuum in Washington where an alert eye to the U.S. national interest was once present.

Of particular concern is how well Western intellectual organizations will withstand the pressures. Take the Western media. The idea that they might come off second best in any face-off with Confucian-style censorship may seem preposterous, but evidence from elsewhere in the East Asian region suggests that for decades

the Western press has increasingly embraced Confucian-style “self-control.” The Western press has long seemed to avoid sensitive issues, such as Japan’s war reparations policy. Even trade policy often seems too hot for the Western press to handle, particularly where advertising revenue might be at risk. When was the last time a major American newspaper took a searching look at the car markets of Japan or South Korea? While Chinese advertisers are as yet only a tiny factor in Western markets, that may change rapidly.

Top American Internet companies have already reneged on Western values in pursuit of lucrative business in their Chinese subsidiaries. How long before they prove similarly malleable in their domestic operations? Writing for the *New York Times* on a conference in Shanghai in 2005, Tina Rosenberg recounted how top American business leaders fawned on Chinese Communist Party officials. She added: “Let’s not pretend that foreign investment will make China a democracy. That argument was born out of desperation and self-interest. Because China is too lucrative a market to resist, American and European businessmen have ended up endorsing the party line through their silence—or worse. They are not molding China; China is molding them.”

Any American who understands the dynamics by which the Chinese empire has been held together over the last 3,000 years will not be sanguine about the outcome. It is time Uncle Sam looked over his shoulder: his coattails are caught in the jaws of a dragon. ■

Eamonn Fingleton writes from Tokyo. This essay is adapted from In the Jaws of the Dragon, released this month by St. Martins Press. Used with permission.

Kosovo Powder Keg

Ten years ago, the Kosovo Liberation Army, an Albanian paramilitary organization, launched its rebellion against the Yugoslav government and was duly labeled a terrorist

group by the U.S. government. Last month, the Albanian majority of Kosovo declared independence in a formal move to separate the province from Serbia. Washington supported the declaration and has recognized Kosovo.

Serbia has vehemently protested the declaration as a violation of its sovereignty and international law, and a crowd of protesters broke into the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade and set part of it ablaze. Russia immediately denounced Kosovo's independence as a violation of the UN Charter, called for an emergency session of the Security Council and most recently threatened the use of force to prevent the region's separation.

If intended as a blow to Russian prestige, the U.S. strategy has backfired. No conceivable American interest has been served by the recognition of Kosovo.

Since the late '90s, Kosovo has functioned as a pawn in the outdated and unnecessary U.S.-Russian rivalry over Eastern Europe. Now, in a futile quest for the approval of global Muslim opinion, America and the EU have not only increased tension with Moscow but stirred up the opposition of other states, such as Spain and China, who have their own unresolved separatist conflicts and see the precedent of Western-backed Kosovo independence as a threat to their interests.

The U.S. is making an internal political dispute into an international question and an occasion for conflict that draws in outside powers. The Russians are likely to respond by issuing retaliatory recognitions of their Abkhaz and South

Ossetian puppet sub-states in Georgia.

Kosovo, which has existed in political and diplomatic limbo, governed by a mixture of UN-approved NATO occupation, anarchy, and majoritarian tyranny, is set to become a new failed state. The remaining Serb minority has suffered from pogroms as indiscriminate and brutal as any meted out against Albanians under Yugoslav rule, and their churches and monasteries have been looted and desecrated in a systematic effort to eradicate Kosovo's Serbian past.

Kosovo's independence also represents a major break from the past, for unlike some other modern Balkan states, it does not draw on any ancient traditions of statehood. Unlike the Yugoslav republics that have broken away over the past 20 years, Kosovo has belonged to the modern state of Serbia since 1912. Not satisfied with reaping the bitter harvest of artificial states in the Near East created after WWI, Washington has cheered the creation of another in Europe.

Post-1945 borders in the rest of Europe have remained generally stable, and their preservation has been one of the causes of European peace. Any new revisions of the political map have the potential to encourage political upheaval and violence, especially in parts of central and Eastern Europe where nationalism is resurgent, arbitrary post-WWI boundaries are still resented, and ethnic groups are scattered across numerous national jurisdictions.

If Washington believes that the Serbs will eventually forget their attachment to

Kosovo, it will show that it has learned nothing about the importance of culture and history. The province holds a supremely important place in the memory of the Serbian people as the spiritual center of Serbian Christianity and also as the location of the 1389 defeat at Kosovo Polje by the Ottomans. It is known among the Orthodox as the Serbs' "earthly Jerusalem," possessing as much significance in their history as the title suggests. Severing the Serbs' political connection to Kosovo is the strangest way to repay America's ally in both world wars—it is as if we had bombed Britain on behalf of the IRA and supported the creation of an independent Ulster, while at the same time depriving the British of the centers of their religious life.

Most troubling of all is that Washington's recognition demonstrates not only that terrorism will be rewarded, but also that its political results will be actively supported by the West. It promotes the mistaken Wilsonian idea of self-determination in an era when the nation-state is already under strain from the forces of globalization and the threat of non-state actors. Our government is encouraging the same forces that are already tearing Pakistan and Iraq apart. If it is good for Kosovo, why not Baluchistan?

The potential for significant instability around the globe is real and directly counter to America's security interests. Any assumption that Kosovo's independence will go uncontested in the future is dangerous fantasy. On the contrary, supporting Kosovo's separation will send the Balkans back down the treacherous road to open warfare. In the long line of the Bush administration's many foreign policy blunders, the partition of Serbia will stand out as one of the worst. ■

Four Score

Failure to join the European Union hasn't harmed the holdouts.

By Neil Clark

"THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY." The favorite refrain of totalitarians throughout history is now uttered by the serial globalizers who insist that membership in sovereignty-sapping bodies such as the EU and NATO is the only option for any self-respecting European country. If you have not surrendered your sovereignty, then you're missing out. But is this really true?

Now it might just be a freak coincidence that the four countries in Europe who have best preserved their national sovereignty—Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Belarus, none of whom are in the EU and only two of whom are in NATO—are all doing quite well. Much better, in fact, than European countries who have handed over law-making powers.

Consider Switzerland, a country that gets bad press from Europhiles for not wanting to join the EU and from serial warmongers for resolutely staying out of military conflicts. The demise of Switzerland has long been predicted. We were told that once it was forced to reduce its banking secrecy, there would be a big outflow of capital and the Swiss franc would lose its position as the world's most secure currency. Moreover Switzerland's high-wage economy would not be able to compete in the cut and thrust of the globalized system. Poppycock. Switzerland stands at number six in the list of the world's richest countries, above the U.S., Japan, and Britain. Uncompetitive? The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report currently ranks Switzerland's high-wage economy as the most competitive in the

world. GDP growth is currently 3 percent, unemployment is only 3.3 percent (compared to the EU average of 7 percent). If Switzerland is suffering from staying out of the EU and the European Economic Area then suffering has never been so comfortable.

Switzerland's non-interventionist foreign policy—the country has not been involved in a war since 1815—has had a direct impact on its prosperity. Bombing and invading other states every few years tends to get rather expensive, as one look at the U.S. deficit evidences. The Swiss' admirable stance of minding their own business also means that, unlike Britain and the U.S., the country doesn't have to spend a fortune protecting its citizens from terrorist attacks.

There is a simple way to tell whether a country is following an interventionist foreign policy: the level of security at its main international airport. Heathrow, since Britain signed on to the Gospel of Scoop Jackson, has become a nightmare: the place is now more like Colditz than a civilian airport. Zurich, by contrast, is how British airports used to be. "Is that it?" my wife and I wondered recently as we passed through the splendidly low-key security. Then we remembered that we were in a country that doesn't attack others.

Switzerland's stubborn refusal to join the EU has led to its demonization. The passionately pro-EU *Independent* newspaper last year ran a headline: "Switzerland: Europe's Heart of Darkness?" drawing attention to a racist anti-immigration poster designed by the Swiss

People's Party. While the poster, which showed three white sheep kicking a black sheep off a Swiss flag was indefensible, the media's double standard toward Switzerland is glaring. The Swissophobes, in their determination to portray the country as the next Third Reich, ignore the fact that SPP's crude nationalism has strengthened the Left, with the Green Party getting almost 10 percent of the vote—one of the best showings of any Green party in Europe.

When it comes to democracy, it's the rest of Europe that should be learning from Switzerland—not the other way round. Switzerland practices the most direct form of people power on the continent. Referenda have been an integral part of the constitution since 1848. One can understand Swiss bewilderment at how surrendering legislative powers to unelected commissars in Brussels would make their country better run.

Norway, like Switzerland, is thriving. In 2006, it officially became the richest country in the world, and it has reached its lofty position by doing exactly the opposite of what the globalizers prescribe. While Britain, another European country that discovered oil off its coast in the 1960s, frittered away the revenues paying people not to work, Norway looked to the future, setting up a State Petroleum Fund. The fund is now worth over \$210 billion. Norway, unlike Britain, has maintained control of its destiny—and control of its own waters by staying out of the EU. Britain, a country built on coal and surrounded by fish, shut down its coalmines and signed up

to the EEC's Common Fisheries Policy, allowing other community member states that had over-fished their own waters to lower their nets in British seas. The result: Britain's fishing industry is all but wiped out. Norway, wisely, had none of it.

Not that Norway is a selfish country: it's the largest donor of overseas aid in the world. By keeping out of the EU, however, Norway has been able to dance to its own tune on foreign affairs. It has also been able to maintain a generous level of welfare provision. The contrast with neighboring Sweden is revealing. Having prospered for many years outside the EEC/EU, the Swedes, by a narrow majority, voted to join the EU in a referendum in November 1994. Thirteen years on, the benefits of membership are hard to discern. Unemployment is around 7 percent, and the national debt has risen to \$124 billion—39 percent of GDP. Young Swedes are unsurprisingly voting with their feet, with tens of thousands flooding over the border to non-EU Norway to work in restaurants or factories.

Iceland is another country that has thrived on independence. Once the poorest nation in Western Europe, it now has the fourth-highest per capita GDP in the world—around \$62,000, and it tops the UN Human Development Index. Growth in the last few years has been hugely impressive—in 2004, the economy grew by 6.4 percent. And Iceland has the lowest unemployment of any sizeable country in Western Europe—currently around 1 percent. As in Norway, concern over losing control over its fishing waters is a major factor in public opposition to joining the EU, as fishing accounts for 40 percent of Iceland's exports. And joining the EU would also threaten the country's cradle-to-grave welfare provision.

The per capita income in Belarus may pale into insignificance compared to

that of Switzerland, Norway, or Iceland, but the benefits of not surrendering decision-making powers to outside bodies is again clear. Upon achieving independence, other former Soviet republics blindly followed the “shock therapy” programs laid down by the IMF/World Bank and other globalist institutions. GDP plummeted, unemployment rose, and mass privatization led to the rise of corrupt oligarchies. Only Belarus bucked the trend.

President Alexander Lukashenko developed a mixed economy, reforming at his own pace and continuing to protect agriculture and heavy industry. The result is that unemployment in Belarus

demned by the EU and United States. Yet that same year in Hungary, over 100 people—including women and the elderly—were injured after police charged a crowd of anti-government protestors and fired rubber bullets and water canons. The Hungarian government's clampdown was barely reported in the Western media. Unlike Belarus, the country is a member of both the EU and NATO.

Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Belarus all operate on different economic systems. The Swiss have a largely low-tax, private-enterprise economy. Iceland and Norway operate high-tax, high-spend welfare-state models. Belarus, in

THE EU IS ABOUT IMPOSING A **ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL** ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL MODEL, WHICH TAKES LITTLE OR NO ACCOUNT OF **REGIONAL OR NATIONAL DIFFERENCES**.

is only 1.6 percent, and out of all the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, only Belarus has thus far equaled the pre-1991 Soviet level of GDP physical volume.

It's worth comparing the progress Belarus has made with that of neighboring Poland, the neocons' favorite European country. Poland followed the globalizers' instructions to the letter: it cut subsidies to its farmers and to industry, sold off its economy, and signed up to join the EU and NATO. The result has been a steep rise in unemployment and a massive exodus of its young people.

Of course, Lukashenko gets bad press for his refusal to sign away his country's sovereignty. Belarus has been labeled “the last dictatorship in Europe,” despite the holding of regular multi-party elections and referendums. Once again, the double standard is glaring. The removal by police of around 150 anti-government protestors from Minsk's main square nearly a week after the 2006 presidential elections was con-

the words of its president, runs a “socially orientated market economy.” But what all these models have in common is that they're organic: they've developed in time, in accordance with national history, religion, and tradition, and enjoy popular support.

By contrast, the EU is about imposing a one-size-fits-all economic and social model, which takes little or no account of regional or national differences or the heritage of the countries it absorbs.

I suggested earlier that the success of the four countries might be a coincidence. Yet I don't think it is. This quartet of countries has been successful because they have maintained crucial decision-making powers. By keeping their independence, and continuing to thrive in spite of the globalizers' forecasts, they have demonstrated a truth that we should never forget. There is always another way. ■

Neil Clark is a British journalist specializing in Middle Eastern and Balkan affairs.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Be Kind Rewind*]

Home Movies

By Steve Sailer

A NEW SATIRICAL WEBSITE called “Stuff White People Like,” which offers dead-on deadpan analyses of status symbols among the under-40 white middle class, has earned 3 million visits in the last ten days. Listed along with such *de rigueur* affectations of the more-sensitive-than-thou set as “Apple Products,” “Threatening to Move to Canada,” and “Barack Obama,” is “Michel Gondry,” the French director of Bjork’s music videos and “such white classics as ‘Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.’”

Christian Lander, who masterminds the site, helpfully advises:

[Mentioning Gondry] can be used to help find common ground with white people. Talk about how you wanted to direct music videos after you saw Michel Gondry’s video for ‘Around the World’ by Daft Punk. Then make a joke about how foolish you were at that age and everyone will have a good laugh. But they will also feel your pain about sacrificing your artistic dreams.

Like much of the stuff white people like, there is something to be said for the ingenious and ingenuous Gondry, whose video autobiography is aptly entitled “I’ve Been 12 Forever.” His twee trademarks are childlike sets and props that he might have made out of cardboard

and other junk he found in his dad’s garage. Indeed, I found Gondry’s surrealist comedy “The Science of Sleep,” with Gael García Bernal as a boyish graphics designer who can’t tell his waking and dreaming lives apart, the most delightful movie of 2006.

Yet while Apple can charge \$800 extra for a laptop, movie tickets all cost about the same, so having a small upscale fan base doesn’t do much financially for Gondry. To escape the status-striver’s ghetto and connect with the American mass market, Gondry is recycling the do-it-yourself aesthetic of “Science” in “Be Kind Rewind.” It stars part-time heavy metal singer Jack Black and part-time rapper Mos Def. Unfortunately, although not surprisingly, American lunkheadedness and French condescension make an ineffectual combination.

While Mos Def is #68 on the “Stuff White People Like” site, Jack Black’s reputation is in decline. Here he plays the same character he did in “School of Rock” and all his other films, the pop culture-obsessed loser. But the suspicion is growing that perhaps Black isn’t a genius who understands the common mind—maybe he just *has* the common mind.

The premise of “Be Kind Rewind” is even more rickety than that of “Science.” Mos Def is the mild-mannered clerk at Danny Glover’s dusty VHS-only video store in the slums of Passaic, New Jersey. While the owner is on vacation, the assistant’s paranoid friend (Black) tries to sabotage the next-door power plant. The electromagnetic pulse erases all the videotapes.

To prevent the owner’s dotty friend, played by Mia Farrow, from tattling when she finds out that “Ghostbusters” is blank, they reshoot it in an afternoon: “I’ll be Bill Murray; you be everyone

else.” Soon the whole neighborhood wants to appear in their 20-minute zero-budget remakes of famous movies.

“Be Kind Rewind” is a tribute to the YouTube generation’s devotion to making stuff up themselves—albeit, an inordinately expensive accolade to amateurism. Gondry, who spent only \$6 million on “Science,” somehow squandered \$20 million here. The endless credits list for this elephantine trifle includes 16 drivers and a “second second assistant director.”

There wasn’t enough in the budget, though, for a good script doctor. Gondry’s amusing trilingual screenplay for “Science of Sleep” showed that the screenwriting Oscar he won for co-authoring “Eternal Sunshine” with the great Charlie Kaufman wasn’t undeserved. But as talented as the *auteur* is, it’s asking too much of the visually oriented Frenchman to expect him to write witty dialogue in English.

Still, “Rewind” raises the question of whether, with an infinite number of choices in free entertainment (some of it as good as “Stuff”) just a click away, can going to the movies survive?

I think so. First, trying to perfect anything visual requires endless work, as the film’s three-month shooting schedule suggests. This means the nonprofessionals who have enough time and energy to make their own movies are generally so young they haven’t had a life yet and can merely parody the pop culture rattling around inside their heads.

Second, one big reason Americans still spend \$9.7 billion annually on movie tickets is that they want to be forced to sit still and watch a single story for two hours without the nagging sense that they could (and thus should) be surfing the Web for something cooler. ■

Rated PG-13 for some sexual references.

BOOKS

[*Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance*, Ian Buruma, Penguin, 288 pages]

In Search of Moderate Islam

By Mary Wakefield

THE PROBLEM with almost everyone writing about Islam and the West, and how the two can best co-exist, is that their pride has become irrevocably bound up in a particular perspective. It's been seven years since 9/11, and by now most pundits have set their faces like flint in one direction or another, and so spend their time not investigating new evidence but instead trying to bully or cajole us into following their lead.

Off they set, time and time again, like old African trackers, stalking over the same territory, in the same company, following the same cold spoor to the same osprey. There go the neocons, trampling over the facts in their eagerness to have a pop at the Prophet. There go the cultural relativists, skipping along with binoculars, refusing to admit that Islam is different or more dangerous than the other beasts. And, let's be honest, there we all go rushing after them, each according to his prejudices.

This is why we should thank God or Allah or at least Penguin for Ian Buruma, who almost alone among 21st-century commentators sets out, not to trot down a well-worn path, but to plot a new course guided by an elegant, thoughtful examination of the facts. In November, Buruma will receive the lucrative Erasmus Prize—150,000 euros (\$220,000) for making “an important contribution within the cultural condition of Europe”—and rightly so. *Murder in Amsterdam* is that rare thing: a genuine piece of journalism in

pursuit of the actual truth about the most complex and frightening issue of our day.

What marks Buruma out from the usual crowd of ready-mix experts is that he takes as his terrain not a formless fog of half-understood Koranic theology but a country, his native Holland. He explores the difficult questions—How tolerant should we be of intolerance? Is Islam necessarily a bad influence?—not by yakking away, making it up as he goes along, but by studying a real event: the assassination of the flamboyant Dutch director, Theo van Gogh, whose criticism of Muslim misogyny (in a film called “Submission”) led to him being shot, then stabbed to death in an Amsterdam street by a young *jihadi* on Nov. 2, 2004.

Holland is a perfect setting for an inquiry into the limits of tolerance—liberal Holland, home of Spinoza and (briefly) Voltaire, still resting on its reputation as a paragon of multicultural harmony. “As a nation we are after all *satisfait*, and it is our duty to remain so,” wrote the great Dutch scholar Johan Huizinga in 1934. Yet as Buruma points out, “There is another side of complacency, of being a little too *satisfait*. When smugness is challenged, panic sets in.” And as Buruma's story begins, Holland is just beginning to feel the first pricks of existential paranoia. Why aren't these Islamic immigrants, the Moroccans and Turks, more grateful? Haven't we rescued them, welcomed them into our tolerant haven? Why can't they play nicely with the other children in the multicultural playground?

Into this uneasy Eden sashay two curious and colorful men who shock, titillate, and ultimately seduce the Dutch. First up is Pim Fortuyn, the theatrical, homosexual politician, or “the divine baldy” as Theo van Gogh called him, who may well have become prime minister had he not been gunned down by an animal-rights activist. Second is the tubby iconoclast, van Gogh, killed by the 26-year-old Dutch-Moroccan Muslim Mohammed Bouyeri. Both men railed against Islam when alive and have, in death, united public opinion against immigrants.

In Professor Buruma's hands, the death of Theo van Gogh becomes a sociological murder mystery. It's as if he holds up a hand to halt the hysteria, saying, “Wait! Don't start a witch-hunt just yet. Give me a moment and I'll figure it all out.” And so he does. In lucid, measured prose, and with the patience of Hercule Poirot, he picks apart the actions and reactions of the characters involved—the assassin, the immigrant communities, the Dutch intelligentsia—and draws from their stories original and arresting answers to the great identity crisis that threatens both Europe and, by extension, America.

What suits Buruma so brilliantly to his self-appointed detective job is that he is unafraid of complexity. Real men and women rarely fit into boxes marked “good” or “bad”; real stories don't have easy endings. Buruma resists the impulse to tidy up the truth.

Fortuyn and van Gogh are today held up as martyrs in the cause of free speech, but Buruma makes sure we know that neither is a saint. Van Gogh was an egotistical show off. He insulted anyone who hung around long enough to listen—not always in the spirit of Enlightenment irreverence, sometimes just to get even. When a young Jewish academic, Evelien Gans, berated van Gogh for being anti-Semitic he retaliated by claiming that Gans, “gets wet dreams about being f---ed by Dr Mengele, the Auschwitz doctor.” Not quite Voltaire, eh?

A little later in the book, a Muslim friend of Buruma's suggests that those who defend van Gogh do so only because they hadn't been personally targeted by him. Are we so sure, she asks, that we want people to have the freedom to offend in this way? It's a fair question but one that would nonetheless enrage the two most vociferous critics of Islam questioned during the course of Buruma's inquiry. Afshin Ellian is an academic and journalist, born in Tehran, who believes passionately that a liberal democracy cannot survive if part of its population believes that a divine law trumps a manmade one. His pal, the Somali-born former Dutch MP, Ayaan

Hirsi Ali would agree. Hirsi Ali is the author of Theo's film, "Submission," and a brave woman who lives in constant fear of a fate like Theo's. For her, Islam is a virus that infects the weak-minded and can drive them to homicide. Only when we wipe out (or seriously undermine) Islam, says Hirsi Ali, will the threat to the West evaporate.

It's difficult to argue with Ayaan. I know this from experience, having interviewed her last year. She's charming, formidable, and she's suffered so much at the hands of Islamism that it feels presumptuous to question her beliefs. Well, that doesn't daunt detective Buruma. He listens politely to both Ellian and Hirsi Ali and takes their warnings seriously, but for him, they, like van Gogh and Bouyeri, are characters in the drama whose violent opinions are best examined in the light of their violent pasts. "If all Muslims were political revolutionaries, Ayaan Hirsi Ali would doubtless be

right," he says. "But ... this is not the case, even among orthodox Muslims."

Buruma's own conclusion, after a year-long inquiry, seems to be that though Islamism is a corrupting influence, it is not a necessary or usually a sufficient condition for turning a young man into a *jihadi* lunatic. The other pressures on a young immigrant can be just as destructive, though trickier to understand.

A few weeks after Van Gogh's death, Buruma interviewed the headmaster of a mixed school in east Amsterdam, similar to the one at which the assassin Mohammed Bouyeri studied. The headmaster's view was that, curiously, it is the boys who strive hardest to succeed in an alien society who are at greatest risk from fundamentalism. "Ten years ago," he said, "we would tell promising pupils from minorities to pull a little harder. We put pressure on them, telling them they had to work harder than others to succeed. Often they would, but then, if things didn't go their way, if they faced a setback because of discrimination, they could get very angry indeed."

It's a strange idea, but it's one that chimes with Mohammed Bouyeri's story. Friends testify to the fact that he grew up a cheerful and helpful boy without much interest in Islam. It was only after he tried and failed to start a youth club and was turned down by both prospective employers and girlfriends that he looked elsewhere for somewhere to belong and found the Prophet.

Was Bouyeri radicalized as much by rejection as by Islam? It's not a trivial suggestion, and (neocons, take note) bringing it up doesn't make Buruma an appeaser or an apologist for Islamism. After all, if there wasn't a strong current of racial prejudice in Holland, neither Fortuyn nor van Gogh would have become such heroes.

Yet if a tolerant Holland is suffering from schizophrenia so is its immigrant population. The "aha!" moment of Buruma's whodunit comes toward the end of the book, when he points out what a bewildering and dislocating effect a secular society can have on a

young immigrant. It can shock a Muslim into atheistic enlightenment, as it did Ayaan Hirsi Ali. But as Hirsi Ali knows all too well from the horrifying fate of her sister Haweya, it can equally drive an immigrant backwards into depression, schizophrenia, or fanaticism.

Belari Said, a Moroccan-born psychiatrist living in Limburg, agrees: "A young Moroccan male of the second generation is ten times more likely to be schizophrenic than a native Dutchman from a similar background." Said believes the problem lies in the adaptation of a strictly regulated society to a more open one. This can lead, he says to disintegration of the personality. "When the process of integration goes too fast, when the son of Moroccan villagers throws himself too quickly into the bewildering maelstrom of Western temptations, his 'cognitive wiring' can go badly awry," Said writes. "The desire for strict religious rules is a form of nostalgia, a way to regain the world of one's parents, or what people think was the world of their parents. To remain sane they long for a paradise lost."

So as *Murder in Amsterdam* draws to a close, we have a new understanding of the crime and the criminal. But what's to be done about it all? Buruma, though keen to remain impartial, does eventually suggest a solution. We must accept and even encourage moderate Islam, he says, because Muslim immigrants of the second or even third generation need religion as a "stabilizing factor." He quotes from the 2002 Cleveringa Lecture given by Job Cohen, the former mayor of Amsterdam, who claimed, "the easiest way to integrate new immigrants may be through their faith." To this, Buruma adds, "Attacking religion cannot be the answer, for the real threat to a mixed society will come when the mainstream of non-revolutionary Muslims has lost all hope of feeling at home." Fingers crossed that he elaborates on this theme when he delivers the 2008 Cleveringa lecture in November. ■

Mary Wakefield is deputy editor of the Spectator.

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[Ray Davies: *Not Like Everybody Else*, Thomas M. Kitts, Routledge, 302 pages.]

44 Years of 3-Minute Poems

By Jesse Walker

WHEN THE KINKS recorded *The Village Green Preservation Society* in 1968, the north London quartet was not trying to create a commercial failure. Quite the opposite. But surely they must have realized that the year of the street riot was not a propitious time to greet the rock world with couplets like “We are the Office Block Persecution Affinity/God save little shops, china cups, and virginity.” They sang those lines with genuine enthusiasm, even if it’s a sure bet that no one in the band was a virgin at the time.

The song—the sprightly, catchy title track of a nearly perfect album—had been composed by Ray Davies, one of rock’s greatest lyricists. It was not a tribute to virginity so much as a tribute to the *idea* of virginity and of everything else praised in this romantic English anthem: village greens, the George Cross, strawberry jam, draught beer, “the old ways.” The record recalls a more rooted existence, but its list of artifacts worth saving draws on pop culture as much as pastoral life: “We are the Sherlock Holmes English Speaking Vernacular/ Help save Fu Manchu, Moriarty, and Dracula.” There is even a shout-out to Donald Duck, who’s about as English as Donald Trump.

The album sold less than 500,000 copies. Four years earlier, the Kinks had been one of the most popular bands in the West, climbing the American and British charts with two brash, loud rock songs, “You Really Got Me” and “All Day and All of the Night.” Indeed, as Thomas M. Kitts points out in this intelligent study, the Kinks “were ranked with the Rolling Stones, both only second to the Beatles.” There was an enormous stylistic

gap between the quiet nostalgia of *Village Green* and the Kinks’ earlier, noisy explosions of adolescent lust and frustration—and that contrast only begins to hint at the band’s range. In their first decade as a recording unit, the Kinks experimented with trad jazz, musical theater, Indian raga, and New Orleans funk. Above all, they delved into the English music-hall tradition, with its vaudevillian showmanship, singalong melodies, working-class sympathies, and epicene moments of burlesque.

The constant thread was a willful refusal to follow pop fashions. The Kinks were happy to *set* trends. The early singles paved the way for punk rock, heavy metal, and grunge, while the band’s later, quieter character studies (“Rosie Won’t You Please Come Home,” “Two Sisters,” “Autumn Almanac”) and satires of modern British life (“A Well Respected Man,” “Dedicated Follower of Fashion,” “Sunny Afternoon”) would have a strong impact on other English artists. Yet even when no one was imitating them, the Kinks kept doing their own thing, recording well-crafted but poor-selling LPs like *Village Green* and, in 1971, *Muswell Hillbillies*, a jazz- and country-flavored concept album about the injustice of urban renewal programs. By the mid-’70s, the band had evolved into a touring troupe that staged Brechtian rock musicals. There were plenty of rock operas in that era, but there was a big gulf between the bombast of *Tommy* or *Jesus Christ, Superstar* and Kinksian efforts like *Preservation*, a witty if tangled three-disc story about a socialist revolution that becomes a puritanical, totalitarian nightmare.

The group took another turn in 1976, when they signed with a new label, Arista, and tried to work within the genres that happened to be popular at the moment, from new wave to metallic hard rock. Davies even dabbled in disco. He was still drawn to the theater, but he generally expressed this interest outside the Kinks (co-writing the musicals *Chorus Girls* and *80 Days*) or channeled it into directing music videos. The band became enormously popular in

America again, though not in the UK. For the most part, the Kinks’ new records succeeded artistically as well as commercially, at least until they left Arista for MCA in the mid-’80s. In the ’90s they finally disbanded. Ray and his brother Dave—the group’s lead guitarist and an important architect of its sound—have since enjoyed low-profile but impressive solo careers.

Muswell Hillbillies is my favorite Kinks record, but *The Village Green Preservation Society* stands out for being so tenaciously removed from its time. Inspired by Dylan Thomas’s play *Under Milk Wood*, the album describes the colorful inhabitants of an unnamed English town. The title track, that toe-tapping ode to Donald Duck and virgins, presents itself as a love letter to the past, but the singer knew very well that the place he was romanticizing wasn’t lost so much as imaginary. Kitts quotes Davies’ description of the village as “a fantasy world that I can retreat to. ... It was my own Wizard of Oz land.”

Davies’ other retreat was a very real place: Muswell Hill, the London suburb where he was raised. The heart of the young Davies’ world was the front room of his family home. “After the pubs closed at 11:00 pm,” Kitts writes, Davies’ father “would invite his drinking cronies to join his extended family and children’s friends for an after-hours party in what would be the family’s overcrowded front room, which, in those largely pre-television days, held the family’s old upright piano, the most important piece of furniture in the Davies’s home, and a 78 r.p.m. wind-up gramophone.” The parties featured rowdy performances of pop hits and music-hall standards, with Davies’ father doing a drunken impersonation of Cab Calloway. As Kitts notes, “The influence of these parties on the Kinks, particularly the campy Kinks of the early to mid-1970s, is remarkable. Whether consciously or not, it seemed as if Ray was trying to recreate the Saturday night parties of his family’s home—complete with chaos, beer, and singalongs.”

In theory, there is a wide gap between the camp aesthetic, with its love of artifice and role-playing, and the traditionalist outlook, with its focus on the permanent things. Yet the Kinks at their campiest were the Kinks at their most rooted. Susan Sontag famously wrote that the camp worldview “sees everything in quotation marks.” Davies does too: “Everybody’s a dreamer, and everybody’s a star/And everybody’s in showbiz, it doesn’t matter who you are,” he sang in “Celluloid Heroes.” But usually he’s yelling for someone to tear those quotation marks down, even as he suspects that life as a quotation might have its own numb pleasures (“I wish my life was a nonstop Hollywood movie show/A fantasy world of celluloid villains and heroes/Because celluloid heroes never feel any pain/And celluloid heroes never really die”).

Davies—one of the few pop figures with a strong cult following among both gays and conservatives—does not simply combine camp with traditionalism. He is at once the alienated individualist and the communitarian populist, a man who praises both the misfit and the ordinary rituals that everybody enjoys (“I like my football on a Saturday/Roast beef on Sundays, all right/I go to Blackpool for my holidays/Sit in the open sunlight”). *Village Green*, like *Under Milk Wood*, wove those strands together by populating Davies’s village with eccentrics; by celebrating their individuality, he celebrated their small community as well. *Muswell Hillbillies* is a darker album, but it takes the same approach, mixing songs about the bizarre characters on Muswell Hill with angry jeremiads at the authorities that bulldoze homes and neighborhoods.

Politically, this outlook translates into an intense distrust both for large corporations and for the state. Like many rock stars, Davies has written songs attacking venal Big Business. Unlike most rock stars, he has written songs attacking domestic government bureaucracies (“I was born in a welfare state/Ruled by bureaucracy/Controlled

by civil servants/And people dressed in gray”). And he may, depending on how you interpret Neil Young’s “Union Man,” be the only rocker ever to devote a song to attacking unions. Davies doesn’t dislike organized labor *per se*, but he had a bad experience with a printers’ union in his teens, and in the mid-’60s his band was barred from touring America for several years because the musicians’ union refused to issue the required work permits. He retaliated with 1970’s “Get Back in Line”: “But that union man’s got such a hold on me/He’s the man who decides if I live or I die, if I starve or I eat/Then he walks up to me and the sun begins to shine/And he walks right back and I know that I’ve got to get back in the line.”

There are several books about the Kinks already, but these are mostly written by rock journalists. Kitts, by contrast, is a professor of literature at St. John’s University in New York. He gives Davies’s lyrics serious scrutiny without neglecting to consider the ways they are amplified, undercut, or elaborated by the music. He also looks beyond Davies’s recorded output to consider the singer’s experiments in film, fiction, and theater. I have my occasional disagreements with his conclusions, but that is inevitable. The depth and breadth of the study are worlds away from the typical pop-star biography and more in line with the other academic work Routledge publishes.

That said, one strength of Davies’ best work is that it *is* pop, even when it’s resolutely ignoring the rest of the pop universe. “The Village Green Preservation Society” may be the most un-1968 song of 1968. It is also one of the most infectious recordings of the last 40 years. Davies could have been a full-time filmmaker, poet, or novelist; we should be grateful that he chose to do most of his work within the confines of the three-minute pop song instead. ■

Jesse Walker is the managing editor of Reason and author of Rebels on the Air: An Alternative History of Radio in America.

[*Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism*, Victoria Clark, Yale University Press, 331 pages]

Cheering for Doomsday

By Doug Bandow

AMERICANS LIKE TO THINK of themselves as *sui generis*, and Christian Zionism is an important aspect of American exceptionalism. The U.S. is unique in its unwavering support for the state of Israel—not just Israel’s right to exist but also to expand into Arab lands.

That Jewish Americans lobby the U.S. government to back Israel is no surprise. But the Jewish community is no monolith. Many Jewish Americans fear that Israel’s policies undermine its future as both Jewish and democratic.

Few such doubts bedevil Christian Zionists. Journalist Victoria Clark opens *Allies for Armageddon* with a vignette from a tour of Jerusalem’s Temple Mount, topped by the Dome of the Rock, one of Islam’s most recognizable sites. As Clark admired the ancient building, a Colorado dentist remarked, “I wish someone would move things along here—like, just blow this place up!” A financial consultant from Nevada, quickly glancing around to check that no Muslim guard was in earshot, agreed: “Yeah, why not blow it all sky-high? We’re Americans! We like to start anew!”

While not all Christian Zionists are determined to trigger Armageddon, most seem willfully oblivious to the practical consequences of their views. Their support for the most extreme Israeli demands is “pouring more fuel on the flames of the dispute that lies at the heart of the Muslim world’s sense of grievance against the West,” writes Clark. But Christian Zionists believe theology trumps reality. God insists on absolute U.S. government backing for Israel.

Only in America, one is tempted to say, but Christian Zionism was born in

Great Britain. Starting in the 1600s, so-called Judaisers and Restorationists published books and raised money to promote the return of Jews to their ancient homeland. The movement's lobbying efforts, mixed with the exigencies of war, eventually led to the Balfour Declaration that promised the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

In time, Christian Zionism crossed the Atlantic. Clark spins an interesting tale of Bible teachers, preachers, and evangelists promoting dispensationalism, the end-times theology that emphasizes the role of Israel. Cyrus I. Scofield, whose *Scofield Reference Bible* has influenced millions, was perhaps the most important. His idiosyncratic Scriptural interpretation, according to Clark, "ensured that pre-millennial dispensationalism spread so deep and wide that it could never be uprooted."

CHRISTIAN ZIONISTS ASSUME **TERRITORIAL AGGRANDIZEMENT** RATHER THAN **PEACEFUL ACCOMMODATION** IS GOD'S DESIGN.

Nevertheless, the political impact of this theology was long muted. "A mood of triumphant exultation reigned at a flurry of prophecy conferences" after Britain gained control of Jerusalem in World War I, but there was little the U.S. government could do.

Christian Zionists did not even influence President Harry S. Truman in recognizing the new state of Israel in May 1948. But after Israel's creation, Christian Zionism became "an overwhelmingly American and Israeli" phenomenon. Private faith metastasized into government policy, for while American legislators may not accept the theology of Christian Zionism, they want the votes of Christian Zionists.

Clark, who ably mixes journalism and historical analysis to explain this curious and dangerous phenomenon, devotes much of her book to the modern American movement. Although U.S. support for Israel is now taken for granted, American policymakers once recognized that American and Israeli

interests were not always the same. The bilateral relationship tightened after the 1967 War as Washington justified the alliance in Cold War terms. Yet American support for Israel increased following the Soviet empire's collapse.

What sets Christian Zionists apart from other advocates of Israel is their religious reasoning. In its most modest manifestation, Christian Zionism treats the secular state of Israel as a theological marker, support for which shows fidelity to God. Christian Zionists point to the fall of the Assyrian, Babylonian, British, Egyptian, Nazi, Persian, Roman, and Russian empires as a consequence of persecuting Jews. In the Old Testament, God tells Israel, "I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse." This verse is now interpreted to mean that only U.S. backing for the modern Jewish state

ensures God's continued favor for America.

Differences in time, space, and faith are ignored. The fact that Israel is a secular nation largely governed by atheists is irrelevant. There is no concern over the lack of any Biblical definition as to what blessing Israel means. Christian Zionists assume territorial aggrandizement rather than peaceful accommodation is God's design.

Another Biblical contention is that thousands of years ago God gave the land occupied by modern Israel to the Jews, which means that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory is divinely ordained. Yet this mandate extends past Jordan into Iraq. Why not, then, turn Baghdad over to Israel? (That would at least solve Washington's current dilemma.) Certain questions are left unanswered: If the Jews are supposed to have this land, why did they lose it? And if losing the territory was part of God's plan, how do we know whether and when the Lord intends to give it back?

Even more controversial is dispensationalism, in which Israel plays an essential role in God's apocalyptic plan for humanity. Christian Zionists turn symbolism and metaphor into a detailed blueprint of God's plan for remaking the world. That forecast is then transformed into a duty to aid God in his efforts. In essence—dispensationalist eschatology itself is fractured—Washington is supposed to help the Jews gather together where they will be slaughtered in the battle of Armageddon. Only then will Jesus return.

A large number of Jews are uncomfortable with their Christian Zionist allies. "Many Jews complain that Christian Zionists do not care for Jews as fellow humans but only as puppets in their gory Christian apocalypse story," reports Clark. Still, most Israelis gratefully accept Christian support, since they obviously never expect these events to occur.

Clark delves into the work of modern Christian apocalypics, most of it little known outside of evangelical circles. The cast of characters is led by Hal Lindsey, who, Clark observes, "could pass for an aging film star." In fact, Lindsey is a star of sorts, having rocketed to evangelical prominence in 1970 with the publication of *The Late Great Planet Earth*, which became the best selling non-fiction book of its decade. More than 30 years later, he remains a staple on the conference circuit and leads Holy Land tours for the faithful. He is, Clark notes, a "prophecy pro who long ago learned not to schedule any one of these End Times events too tightly." After all, for some 2,000 years God has been embarrassing people who offer specific dates for Christ's return. Lindsey is too smart to fall into that trap.

Christian Zionists have also promoted their apocalyptic eschatology through fiction. Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins authored the *Left Behind* series, which begins with the Rapture of believers to heaven. More than 60 million books have been sold.

While the novelists were spreading Christian Zionist doctrine, political activists were connecting with Washing-

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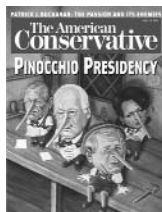
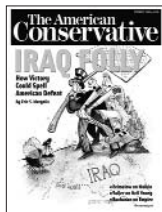
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ton. Clark describes the late Jerry Falwell, who co-founded the Moral Majority with LaHaye, as "America's best-known Christian Zionist." Pat Robertson, who established the Christian Coalition, became another public face of Christian political activism. Both Falwell and Robertson demanded absolute U.S. backing for Israel and urged Israel to resist any pressure to negotiate for peace.

One of today's leading political Christian Zionists is John Hagee, pastor of San Antonio's Cornerstone Church and founder of Christians United for Israel. He was "the most politically savvy Christian Zionist I'd encountered," Clark writes, eschewing that Hagee has little interest in converting Jews. "[His] abdication of his Christian responsibility to share the Gospel with all non-Christians, his refusal to mention Jesus to Jews, has cost him a few Christian Zionist and Messianic friends but it's secured him the respect and trust of Likud politicians as well as more radical right-wingers," she explains.

Although some Christian Zionists deny that their policy prescriptions are derived from theology, others unabashedly rely on the Bible. For instance, reports Clark, Hal Lindsey wishes President George W. Bush "understood prophecy well enough to realize that Islam is 'violent to the core' and [would] go ahead and open that new [military] front" against Iran. When pressed for his views on other Arab countries, Lindsey added, "I wish the U.S. would obliterate Syria and not leave it to Israel."

In predicting an attack on Israel by Iran, Russia, and assorted Arab states, Jerry Falwell said, "we as a nation better make sure we're on the right side. Supporting Israel is not an option: It is a divine command." Reverend Hagee seems fixated on Iran: "Make no mistake, Iran will use nuclear weapons against the United States of America." In another address, he declared, "Listen up, president of Iran ... we are going to be your worst nightmare, Mr. Ahmadinejad. The pharaoh threatened Israel, he

ended up fish-food in the sea."

Despite the shared goal of supporting Israel, there remain important fissures within Christian Zionism, and Clark ably details these complicated and often contentious disagreements. But the movement has gained extraordinary political clout.

There are, of course, perfectly legitimate reasons to urge Washington to support Israel. Christian eschatology is not one. Can orthodox Christians really argue that the God of all creation requires Uncle Sam's assistance to bring his plans into effect? Should the faithful put the cause of atheist Jews above that of Palestinian Christians? The Scriptural interpretation is strained; the practical application is irresponsible; the theological implications are heretical. Nevertheless, U.S. policy toward Israel seems unlikely to change significantly no matter who is elected president in November.

Is there any hope? Clark concludes her illuminating yet depressing book:

No more than any other kind of religious fundamentalists will Christian Zionists be wooed away from their Bible literalism by theological argument, or shaken out of their beliefs by events turning out differently from how they expect. Again and again, the ideology has proved its chameleon-like ability to change with the times, to plug the gap left by ignorance of history and foreign cultures and assuage an unreasoning existential terror. Christian Zionists are unlikely to change. It is up to the rest of us to rescue U.S. foreign policy from the junk theology masquerading as Christian Zionism. ■

Doug Bandow is the Robert A. Taft Fellow at the American Conservative Defense Alliance. A former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan, he is the author of several books, including Beyond Good Intentions: A Biblical View of Politics and Foreign Follies: America's New Global Empire.

Why Blame Mexico?

To grasp American immigration policy, one needs only remember that the United States frowns on smoking while subsidizing tobacco growers.

We say to impoverished Mexicans, “See this river? Don’t cross it. If you do, we’ll give you good jobs, drivers licenses, citizenship for your kids born here, school for said kids, public assistance, governmental documents in Spanish for your convenience, and a much better future. There is no penalty for getting caught. Now, don’t cross this river, hear?”

How smart is that? We’re baiting them. It’s like putting out a salt lick and then complaining when deer come. Immigrant parents would be irresponsible not to cross.

The problem of immigration, note, is entirely self-inflicted. The U.S. chose to let them in. It didn’t have to. They came to work. If Americans hadn’t hired them, they would have gone back.

We have immigration because we want immigration. Liberals favor immigration because it makes them feel warm and fuzzy and from a genuine streak of decency. Conservative Republican businessmen favor immigration, frequently *sotto voce*, because they want cheap labor that actually shows up and works.

It’s a story I’ve heard many times—from a landscaper, a construction firm, a junkyard owner, a group of plant nurserymen. “We need Mexicans.” You could yell “Migra!” in a lot of restaurants in Washington, and the entire staff would disappear out the back door. Do we expect businessmen to vote themselves out of business? That’s why we don’t take the obvious steps to control immigration. (A

\$1,000 a day fine for hiring illegals, half to go anonymously to whoever informed on the employer would do the trick.)

In Jalisco, Mexico, where I live, crossing illegally is regarded as casually as pirating music or smoking a joint and the coyotes who smuggle people across as a public utility, like light rail. The smuggling is frequently done by bribing the border guards, who are notoriously corrupt.

Why corrupt? Money. In the book *De Los Maras a Los Zetas*, by a Mexican journalist, I find an account of a tunnel he knew of that could put 150 illegals a day across the border. (I can’t confirm this.) The price of passage is about \$2,000 a person. That’s \$300,000 a day, tax-free. What does a border guard make? (And where can I find a shovel?) The author estimated that perhaps 40 tunnels were active at any given time. Certainly some are. A woman I know says she came up in a restaurant and just walked out the door. Let’s hear it for Homeland Security.

There is much noise about whether to grant amnesty. The question strikes me as cosmetic. We are not going to round up millions of people and physically throw them across the border. Whether we should doesn’t matter. It’s fantasy. Too many people want them here or don’t care that they are here or don’t want to uproot families who have established new lives here. Ethnic cleansing is ugly. Further, the legal Latino population is just starting to vote. A bumper crop of Mexican-American kids, pos-

sessed of citizenship, are growing headlong toward voting age. These people cannot be thrown out, even in principle.

People complain that Mexico doesn’t seal the borders. Huh? Mexico is a country, not a prison. It has no obligation to enforce American laws that America declines to enforce. Then there was the uproar when some fast-food restaurant in the U.S. began accepting pesos. Why? Mexican border towns accept dollars. Next came outrage against Mexico because its consulates were issuing ID cards to illegals, which they then used to get drivers licenses. Why outrage? A country has every right to issue IDs to its citizens. America doesn’t have to accept them. If it does, whose problem is that?

If you want to see a reasonable immigration policy, look to Mexico. You automatically get a 90-day tourist visa when you land. To get residency papers, you need two things apart from photographs, passport, etc. First, a valid tourist visa to show that you entered the country legally. Mexico doesn’t do illegal aliens. Second, a demonstrable income of \$1,000 a month. You are welcome to live in Mexico, but you are going to pay your own way. Sounds reasonable to me.

You want a Mexican passport? Mexico allows dual citizenship. You (usually) have to be a resident for five years before applying. You also have to speak Spanish. It’s the national language. What sense does it make to have citizens who can’t talk to anybody?

It looks to me as though America thoughtlessly adopted an unwise policy, continued it until reversal became approximately impossible, and now doesn’t like the results. It must be Mexico’s fault. ■

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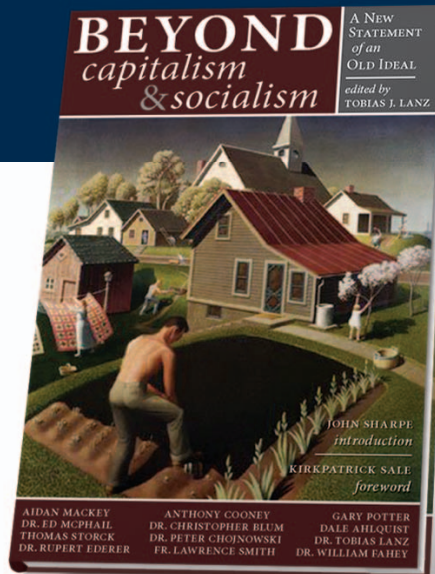
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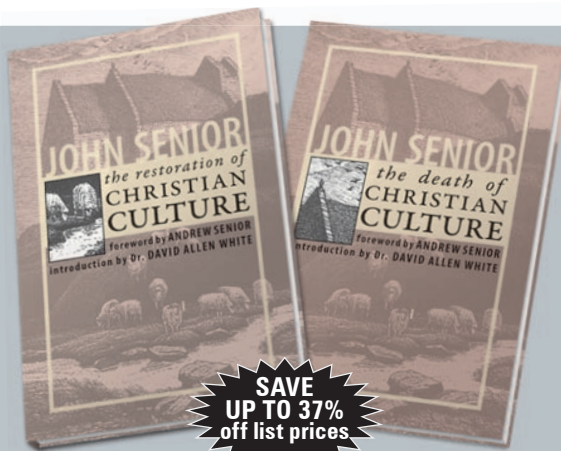
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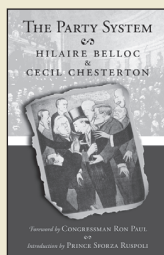
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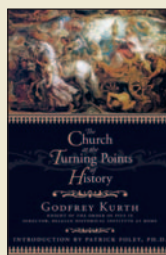


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